

*Administration of Justice*

it to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections to deal with it in the proper and correct way.

**Mr. Greene:** Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit a question?

**Mr. Olson:** Yes.

**Mr. Greene:** Inasmuch as this involves a security matter, or allegedly so, does the hon. member not feel it would be useful to have a finding of fact by a judicial inquiry, which would be one of the nature that hears security matters, and that the findings of fact by that judicial inquiry would then be the basis on which any action in respect of privilege is then taken by this house?

**Mr. Olson:** I agree that this is a possible subsequent action but I believe that the question of privilege should be referred to a committee of this house in the first instance. If that committee, in attempting to gather all the evidence and to assess it, finds it is unable to come to a conclusion without going into security files, it would then be right and proper for the committee to suggest that some evidence required to be given in camera before a judge who could look into the matter. But I do not believe that transferring it right from the floor of this house at this time to a judicial inquiry and asking the judge to decide on the matter laid out in the terms of reference is the correct procedure.

**Mr. David Lewis (York South):** Mr. Speaker, the understanding which was indicated by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Greene) as to what is hoped for from the inquiry would be precisely my understanding and, I think, the understanding of most other hon. members. It seemed to me that the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton) said that he reserved the right, and other members of his party reserved the right, to deal with the question of privilege. That was one of the things he was reserving, namely, the right to raise the question of privilege again if the finding of fact by the commissioner supported the contention that such a question of privilege existed.

I rise to say a very few words on behalf of those of us in this party. Like all other hon. members of this house we had hoped, by the tone that was set this afternoon by all those who spoke, that the matter which had occupied our attention for two days last week was going to come to an end and we would be able to proceed with the business of parliament.

[Mr. Olson.]

I am distressed, as I am sure all other hon. members are, that we now appear to be again on the brink of another scrap of very much the same sort as we went through on Thursday and Friday, only in a different framework, dealing with slightly different words but essentially the same scrapping across the floor that we had last week. Surely every hon. member here will have found last week end, as I found, by the numerous phone calls I received and which all those who went home must have received, that our constituents, the people who sent us here, cannot quite understand what much of the fuss is about. What they are wondering about is when we are going to get down to work on the legislation and on the issues which face this country and this parliament.

I ask all of us, Mr. Speaker, to avoid getting into the scramble and the mess that we were in last week. It will not take much to get us into this sort of mess once again. Suggestions that certain words are intended to hide things, counter-suggestions that somebody is afraid of something, and away we go once again into exactly the same morass in which we found ourselves for two solid days last week and in which we are still.

I think the hon. member for Kamloops made a good suggestion. I believe the suggestion would be more valuable if he and others had not proceeded to deal with the subject matter of his suggestion on the floor of this house. That is precisely the way to invite the sort of exchange that may have no end this evening and may go on, because we are still on the question of privilege. It seems to me that the suggestion the hon. member for Kamloops dealt with has obvious good sense and fairness. It seems to me that what he suggested ought to be accepted by representatives of the government as being fair and sensible. Other things that he suggested, if he will forgive my saying so, obviously do not have very much sense.

• (8:50 p.m.)

For example, it does not make much sense to me to have a statement in the terms of reference to the effect that this was worse than the Profumo case. I should like to know by what criteria you decide the degree of the case between Profumo and somebody else—I was going to say the degree of odorousness of a certain situation. I do not know what the criteria are.

Similarly, it seems to me it is nonsense to talk about not very important words, if I may