

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

day. There is a point to which I have wanted to make reference, a point which I feel should be brought to the attention of hon. members now. It is my understanding of our practice that there can be only one debate on a specific matter under standing order 26 during a session. If this afternoon we had such a debate a question might very well be made, by way of a point of order, that a second debate on the same matter could not be held tomorrow. I am wondering whether that is the position in which hon. members want to place themselves. If the situation deteriorated as a result of a vote which might take place on the negotiations which the minister has indicated are to take place tomorrow, then a second debate could not be held.

The citation which I have in mind appears in May's 17th edition at page 363 and is as follows:

It has also been ruled that a matter, specifically debated on a motion for adjournment under the standing order, cannot be raised again in the same form during the same session.

This reference is to standing order 26. In other words there can only be one adjournment motion under standing order 26 in respect of any particular subject. In view of that, it is my feeling that hon. members might want to move with some caution in regard to the question of whether we should have a debate on this urgent matter this afternoon or tomorrow.

Taking this fact into account and, of course, noting the arguments put forward by hon. members in support of the proposal made by the hon. member for Ontario, I suggest that the motion should not be allowed at least for this afternoon.

**EXTERNAL AFFAIRS****MERCANTILE BANK—CRITICISM BY U.S. AMBASSADOR TO CANADA**

On the orders of the day:

**Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Prime Minister which relates to a gratuitous statement or observation by the United States ambassador to Canada, Walton Butterworth, regarding the provisions of the Bank Act as they affect the Mercantile Bank. It also relates to strong personal criticism by the ambassador of the hon. member for Davenport, (Mr. Gordon) while minister of finance. Does the government feel it appropriate for this ambassador, as in the past, if I may use a colloquialism, to be a

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butter-in on Canadian affairs? Is he justified in criticizing the policies of Canada in the manner he did, occupying the position that he occupies?

**Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, having regard to the matter raised by the right hon. gentleman, I am told that the reports in question related to a private off-the-record discussion or conference. Therefore it would be quite inappropriate for me to comment on those discussions which took place at a private conference. They were off the record and known to be such by those who took part. If the remarks attributed to the ambassador had been made publicly, a very different situation would have been created.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Mr. Speaker, that is a new rule. I suggest to the Prime Minister that the presence at this gathering in Washington of the Canadian ambassador to the United States, who took up the defence of Canada, would indicate the public nature of this meeting. Has the Prime Minister received a report from the Canadian ambassador? This United States ambassador is interfering in Canadian affairs, and did so even during my period of office. Is he justified in subjecting us to this type of criticism?

**Mr. Pearson:** Mr. Speaker, the right hon. gentleman does not admit that there is any apparent distinction between a private discussion, the contents of which were revealed, and a public discussion. I have received a report on this matter from Washington which confirms that this discussion was off the record, and that this was known by those who took part.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Is it justifiable for an ambassador to a friendly country at a private meeting, which was as public as this apparently was, to subject us to this type of criticism for the benefit of the Rockefeller interests?

**AIR TRANSPORT****AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL—ALLEGED REFUSAL BY GOVERNMENT TO ACCEPT SALARY RECOMMENDATIONS OF JUDGE ROBINSON**

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the President of the Treasury Board in respect of the threatened strike of air traffic control personnel. Will he tell us why the