

Conduct of Justice Minister

were the facts, even if such a statement were regular in any event.

The statement was issued several hours after R.C.M.P. Deputy Commissioner J. R. Lemieux told the Dorion inquiry he was told that the Prime Minister advised Mr. Rouleau last summer that he was to be questioned by the R.C.M.P.

The Montreal *Star* of February 27 carries a report to the same purport, and in that report are these words:

There are still several witnesses to be heard, including mountie Commissioner McClellan, Mr. Favreau and Mr. Tremblay.

Now, sir, the powers that parliament gave are great powers to be exercised in accordance with those rules of propriety which, while unwritten, have all the force of precedent. Why did the minister not allow the Prime Minister to make the statement? Why did he issue this statement? Why did he not wait until he could give evidence; for after all what he did by that statement was to challenge, by his simple *ipse dixit*, the sworn evidence of the deputy commissioner of the mounted police. This was a strange performance, and whether the evidence is hearsay or not this challenges the truthfulness of a high officer in the mounted police who gave his testimony under oath.

The minister's powers have to be carefully exercised. We have the Minister of Justice saying what the Prime Minister did. We remember the evidence of a few weeks ago, when the Prime Minister forgot—

Mr. McIlraith: Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Diefenbaker: And again this matter comes up.

Hon. G. J. McIlraith (President of the Privy Council): Surely I am entitled to raise a point of order. It is interesting to hear the right hon. gentleman make an argument but I would respectfully draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to standing order 26(3). The procedure for raising a motion to adjourn the house is set out, and then the standing order says:

He then hands a written statement of the matter proposed to be discussed to Mr. Speaker, who, if he thinks it in order, and of urgent public importance, reads it out and asks whether the member has the leave of the House.

If Mr. Speaker questions the urgency of debate with respect to the proposition made, he may invite hon. members to speak on the question of such urgency and a ruling may be made after listening to argument.

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

What the right hon. gentleman is doing now is this. He is getting into an argument which is very far ranging, instead of stating the simple proposition which he believes warrants the adjournment of the house so that it may proceed to discuss the matter of urgent public importance, with particular reference to urgency of debate. He is going back to matters which happened a month ago and making certain wild general allegations. I respectfully suggest he should state his question briefly, as to why the house should be asked now to debate the evidence which has been given before a royal commission, while that royal commission is still sitting.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I am not debating the evidence at all.

Mr. McIlraith: I have not yet seen the written statement handed to you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Diefenbaker: With everything the hon. gentleman has said I am in full agreement. I am not debating what took place there. I am debating the right of the Minister of Justice to act in this fantastic way; to interfere by an ex parte statement made outside the house and to leave the impression that the deputy commissioner was a man without integrity and lacking in truthfulness. As to the question of urgency, it arises immediately because tomorrow, according to my information, the commissioner will be called. What position will he be in?

Mr. McIlraith: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I dislike having to be so persistent, but if the right hon. gentleman is going to debate the question of urgency, as he appears to be beginning to do now, he can only do so after we have had a written statement handed to the Chair in accordance with the provisions of standing order 26 and after Your Honour has taken appropriate action on that written statement. We have not yet seen that written statement and, until we have, I respectfully suggest that the right hon. gentleman has no right to proceed.

Some hon. Members: Closure.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I have to lay the foundation for the statement because of the unusual action taken by a member of the cabinet awkward squad. I have to lay a foundation, and on the one hand the foundation is as to urgency. The minister says that if in fact this statement was made by Mr. Lemieux,