

Canadian Unity

actually is considered by the house. As I have said, this might occur very shortly. I am asking for the co-operation of the hon. members for Sherbrooke (Mr. Allard) and Lapointe (Mr. Grégoire) who seem to wish to add to the arguments already brought up.

Mr. Allard: Mr. Speaker, I am quite willing to co-operate, but I should like to add one word after rising five or six times, precisely on this motion of the hon. member for Villeneuve (Mr. Caouette) who raised the most important, the most capital question in Canada at this time. I shall dwell for perhaps 60 seconds on the urgency of debate.

I say it is an urgent debate but I would ask the hon. member for Villeneuve to take this into account so that the debate may be held after the following events have taken place: the right hon. Prime Minister said yesterday that he was expecting in November the report of the Laurendeau-Dunton commission which will deal precisely with these problems of one nation or two nations on the social, cultural and political plane. There will be shortly an interprovincial conference called by Mr. Roberts. The parliamentary committee on the constitution in Quebec will get back to work shortly and, apparently, report early in December. The states general of Quebec and of French Canada are meeting on November 22. That is why the subject is so important and capital.

I would invite the hon. member for Villeneuve to press the matter further at the beginning of December, in order that we may discuss before the end of 1967, the most important problem faced by Canada.

Mr. Gilles Grégoire (Lapointe): Mr. Speaker, I believe I have some exceedingly striking arguments which will irrefutably convince you of the urgency of the debate.

My first argument derives from two different positions: the Minister of Justice (Mr. Trudeau) says there is only one nation in Canada; the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) says there are two. So, the debate is most urgent because the problem is liable to create a cabinet crisis, and the debate will inevitably continue on cabinet solidarity.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I wonder anew if it might not be wise to stop this discussion. I think I was perfectly right when I indicated a moment ago to the hon. member for Villeneuve (Mr. Caouette) that a problem of such scope could certainly not be solved by a debate within the limits of standing order 26,

[Mr. Speaker.]

and I am sure the hon. member for Lapointe surely agrees with me on this point.

I cannot imagine what argument could be put forward by the hon. member for Villeneuve or some other member of the house to prove that such a broad question should be considered this afternoon, in the very particular circumstances of the business intended for this afternoon. Once again, I wish to remind the hon. member that, in any event, I have already made a ruling I would not prevent the hon. members from stating their points of view, although I think that this debate should stop now.

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Speaker, if we are not allowed to put forward our views on the urgency of the debate, I believe that the whole procedure was irregular. The hon. members for Villeneuve, Trois-Rivières and Sherbrooke were permitted to voice their opinion.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. As I said before, the hon. member will certainly have the opportunity, within a very short while, to submit his representations when it is possible to have this debate. As he knows, the rules state merely that the Chair should listen to the representations and to the suggestions that are made. However, they do not state that the Chair must listen to all the arguments, all the representations of each member. I think the rules give full permission, however, to the Speaker of the House to come to a decision before he listens to the 264 members. Therefore, I ask the hon. members once again to allow me to come to the next item of business on the order of the day.

Mr. Caouette: I rise on a point of order. I think that to clarify the present situation and without embarking immediately on a debate, as you suggest, if the Prime Minister gave us some indication so as to advise us approximately when such a debate would take place in the House of Commons, it would be satisfactory to everyone because, under the present circumstances, neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives utter a word in the house, while outside the house, everybody uses phrases such as "one nation", "two nations," "two founding people" and "three founding people." One does not know where to go—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member could perhaps put that question to the Prime Minister when we reach the question period.