

Correspondence on Surcharges

for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), who is undoubtedly some sort of expert on house procedure in constitutional matters, that I thought his argument in this debate was very weak. In fact, he did not deal at all with this problem of the confidentiality of documents and legal opinions, and I would be very interested at some later date—because obviously there is not time this evening—to hear him in a pointed way express himself as to whether he thinks legal opinions should be tabled in this house.

Mr. Knowles: Is the hon. member not aware that I have expressed my opinion on that matter already?

Mr. Speaker: Order. In accordance with the order made earlier in this sitting, the hour for consideration of private members' business has now expired.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, it was clearly understood that the five minutes taken by the hon. member for Trinity (Mr. Hellyer) would not be deducted from the hour, and that there would be one hour permitted for this measure. I am sure that that is the basis on which we facilitated the supply and the Montreal bill, and there is yet five more minutes.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): It was not five minutes.

Mr. Pickersgill: Well, if the government wants to close the debate and shut us off—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Churchill: Read tonight's Toronto *Star*.

Mr. Pickersgill: I have read it.

Mr. Speaker: As far as the Chair is concerned there was an order made earlier today, and the hon. member for Trinity asked for a certain right which was in derogation of the order. Of course, the house can continue if it so desires, but I am within the four corners of this room and the order made therein today. What is the desire of the house?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, may I suggest that in view of the fact that we are about to celebrate Christmas and that the government feels strong in its position in this house, the government ought to test that position and give the house an opportunity tonight, before the new year, to show how weak the government is by its refusal to have a vote.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I understood the hon. member rose on a point of order, but I fail to see what the point of order is.

[Mr. Bell (Saint John-Albert).]

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I was a little impulsive.

Mr. Bell (Saint John-Albert): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that there are certain agreements which have been made. I have one or two minutes more, if I could finish my remarks. I was quoting from the hon. member for Broadview in 1947—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I regret that the hon. member's time has expired.

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, on the point of order raised by the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate, if I recall, when the house gave consent to the hon. member to move his bill five minutes was asked for, and in fact the hon. member only used two minutes of the time of this house. Consequently, I submit that the time has now expired.

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): The hour has expired.

Mr. Churchill: Mr. Speaker, the arrangement has been completed. A full hour has been allowed for this purpose. Although it might have been interesting to draw the matter to a conclusion tonight, I myself have some remarks on this vital matter affecting the conduct of parliament, which will be helpful to an opposition which at one time might have hoped to get back into office—

Mr. Bell (Saint John-Albert): But not after yesterday.

Mr. Churchill: —but not after yesterday. I think their chances now are slim.

If we may now revert to government business, I have a suggestion to make to the house which the house might find agreeable. As far as the government is concerned, we would be prepared at this stage to deal with the divorce bills and to pass those tonight in the few minutes which are remaining, if the house so desires. We would gladly give the time for that purpose.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Speaker, I want to register a formal protest at what has just happened. This afternoon we gave our consent in good faith to allow the government to get through its supply after a motion has been passed, which if we had not so consented would have left this country without any supply until January 21. We did that, as I say, in good faith and on the clear understanding that there was to be one hour allowed for my hon. friend's motion. The hon. member for Trinity asked for five minutes for his bill outside of that hour.