

Administration of Justice

order in council, to bring about this inquiry. This would seem to be the only possible way of doing it.

Mr. Nielsen: May I ask the hon. member a question?

Mr. Thompson: You may ask questions afterwards. We have listened to the hon. gentleman talking hour after hour for the last two days, and my remarks are short and to the point.

I plead with the Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice, the Solicitor General, who is directly involved by virtue of his responsibilities, and with the hon. member for Calgary North and others on the Conservative benches who are Privy Councillors and directly involved in the implications and innuendos now before the house, to consider this suggestion.

I cannot help but recall the remarks made last night by the Minister of Forestry in the previous government, who was speaking right from his heart on the matter before us. Can we not somehow come together and agree on terms of reference in order that the inquiry can go forward and dispose of this question? If we do not, the only other way to dispose of the matter is to forget about it and go on with our work. However, it seems that is asking too much in view of what has appeared in the press and been put on the record during today and yesterday.

My only reason for bringing this suggestion to your attention, Mr. Speaker, is to emphasize that nothing constructive will be gained if we continue on Monday as we have today. The only way we can resolve the matter now is to agree on a certain course. Surely, as men we can find some area of agreement so that we can move forward and let the matter be taken care of, in a satisfactory way. Actually, I do not think any way would be entirely satisfactory because the matter is too dirty and messy, but let us at least resolve the problem so that we can turn to other matters before us.

I plead with you, Mr. Speaker, to use your influence in this regard. You have let the debate go on and on and on today. At times I have wondered whether there is any basis for our carrying on in this way. I also plead with the Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice and members of the official opposition to get together and work out a basis on which we can move forward.

Mr. Nielsen: May I ask the hon. gentleman a question before he resumes his seat. Would he inform the members of the house how parliament can set up an inquiry based on unsupported allegations about unnamed people mentioned in an unseen report?

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, I do not claim to be an authority as far as the law is concerned. As I have listened to some of the arguments made today I have been rather happy that I do not belong to that particular profession. But I would say to the hon. member for Yukon there is no other way to resolve this matter, so let us get on with it. If the Minister of Justice is wrong in what he has said to the press or the house, then he has put his own political life at stake. If certain Privy Councillors, who are rightfully indignant and concerned about the matter, have been wronged, then the matter must be righted. We cannot keep a cloud hanging over them.

Mr. Churchill: May I ask the hon. gentleman a question in that connection. Is each member of the Privy Council to appear before this commission to prove his innocence? That would be a distortion of justice in this country.

Mr. Thompson: I do not profess to know the technical answer to that question, but my opinion would be no. This would not be necessary, providing the matter is being handled in the right way and in the right place.

Mr. Churchill: Then who appears before the commission?

Mr. Thompson: We can get together and work that out.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to say anything provocative to any section of the house. I do not intend to move any motion at this time, but I am wondering whether we have not had enough for today. If we cannot hope that over the week end this matter will be resolved, would the house agree to letting Your Honour call it six o'clock?

[*Translation*]

Mr. J. R. Keays (Gaspé): Mr. Speaker, I am addressing myself to you at this time, not filled with high-strung emotions but with all the timidity that is in me.

I ask the Minister of Justice to please settle once and for all the matter that has been before us for two days.