

to commend a Speaker, might I extend my thanks to the hon. member for Stormont (Mr. Lamoureux) for his co-operation in this regard.

I simply should like to see the terms of the taxi contract which exists between the operators of the Ottawa railway station and the monopoly contractor for the service at this time. I know for a fact that there are not sufficient taxis at the station on numerous occasions to serve the number of passengers who get off the trains. I hesitate to refer to a member of this house who is not here but the hon. member for Cochrane (Mr. Habel), who sits immediately in front of me, on more than one occasion has protested about the half hour delay in waiting for the taxi service provided by the monopoly contract holder since the independent cabs will not service the station at the rush hours when they would be helping the monopoly contract holder to carry the burden which he has agreed to carry under his contract.

When I ask for the production of papers in this matter I do so because I believe that the members of parliament, the representatives of the people, are entitled to see the terms of such a contract. I am becoming a little provoked at being told that these are things which are of such brilliance or are so sacrosanct that our eyes should not behold them or that I am only a representative of the people and why should I want to look at contracts given to taxi companies which serve the public. One reason I believe we should be allowed to see them is that we are responsible to the people and when the people are being gypped out of competing taxi services we are entitled to see what the terms of this monopoly are. This applies to a great many things other than the Ottawa station taxi service contract. I for one wish very much to see a copy of this contract. I believe the reason it is concealed from the eyes of the representatives of the people is that there is something rotten in the state of Denmark. Perhaps I should not use that reference after the way in which some people have commented on the action of the Secretary of State (Miss LaMarsh) in using the word "rotten". I am quoting Shakespeare, not the Secretary of State. I think these contracts should be open to members of parliament who are the representatives of the people.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Do I understand from the hon. member's remarks that he wishes to withdraw his motion?

Contract for Airport Taxi Service

Mr. Cowan: Sir, I have no such desire nor intention.

Mr. Mackasey: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the hon. gentleman a question?

Mr. Speaker: Does the hon. member for York-Humber wish to receive a question from the hon. member for Verdun?

Mr. Cowan: I am quite anxious to receive a question or even more.

Mr. Mackasey: Mr. Speaker, I had intended to participate in this debate and did not realize there were no other speakers and that the hon. member would be terminating the debate. I would, therefore like to ask the hon. member this question. In view of the tremendous amount of research reflected in the hon. member's speech, I should like to ask whether he has heard of the flagrant increase in the cost of the service from Dorval to Verdun by Murray-Hill?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would suggest that the hon. member's contribution by way of a question is not relevant to the debate before the house. Is the house ready for the question?

Mr. Howard: Mr. Speaker, may I rise on a point of order? In the light of standing order 6, paragraphs 7 and 8, and the difficulty of interpreting that standing order, and without prejudice to the right to argue its interpretation at a subsequent time, could it be understood that the vote on the motion now is proceeding by leave?

Mr. Speaker: I suggest to the hon. member that this is a very irregular procedure. So far as the Chair is concerned I am bound by the rules. I may point out to the hon. member that there is a precedent which goes back to October 31. I agree that there cannot be a vote according to the standing orders but, as was pointed out by the Deputy Speaker when he was faced with a similar situation, to decide whether or not there should be a vote the Chair has to take the sense of the house and if it is the sense of the house that there is opposition and five members rise, then the proposed vote is delayed until the resumption of the business of the house at eight o'clock. But this has to be determined in the first instance.

Mr. Howard: That is exactly the point we want to argue.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member can argue the point if he wishes.