

there is unanimous agreement to reverting at this stage to the question originally raised this afternoon by the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

Mr. Hellyer: Mr. Speaker, I cannot give consent to reverting unless the hon. member is willing to indicate that he will put forward a serious motion rather than a spurious one. If he will undertake that, I shall be pleased to give consent. That will not be as imprecise as this veiled situation is this afternoon.

Mr. Nugent: Is the minister serious about the amendment? He said, referring to the charge, that it was in performance of his duties as a minister of the Crown. I take it he does not want to be tried on his conduct as a member of this house.

Mr. Hellyer: Change it to "as a member of this house".

Mr. Pickersgill: You are not willing to make the charge.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair is required to rule on the question before the house, which is whether we should adjourn the business of the house to discuss the matter we have been discussing for the last hour.

Mr. Starr: Mr. Speaker, before we do that may I say a word? I have not said anything so far. Regardless of how the Chair rules, I should like to direct my remarks to the right hon. Prime Minister as leader of the house and Prime Minister of this country and ask him, in view of the serious charges laid, whether he will not take it upon himself to give direction and leadership to the house by saying that this matter will be referred to the standing committee on national defence on Monday in order to clear away the charges which have been made this afternoon and so that his minister will not be left with a dark cloud hanging over his head?

Mr. Pearson: If the hon. member in question will put his charge in a form which is considered by the Speaker as indicating a breach of privilege which should be investigated, and if the hon. member will stand by his charge, we will see that that charge is dealt with at once.

An hon. Member: How do you want it spelled out?

Mr. Pearson: If there is no unanimous consent today the hon. member can follow

Motion for Adjournment

the rules of the house, put his charge in writing, put it on the order paper, and the Speaker will decide whether or not there is a prima facie case.

Mr. Nugent: The Chair has raised a nice question—

• (4:40 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The ruling which I have to make now is whether there should be an adjournment of the proceedings of the house to consider a matter of definite and urgent importance, according to the terms of standing order 26. The effect of this adjournment would be to allow a debate until five o'clock because, according to standing orders, an adjournment debate at this time does not dispense with private members' hour, and I think hon. members will agree with me it would be just a bit out of place and improper to grant an adjournment for a 15-minute debate.

In any event, if I require an authority to support my view that there should not be an adjournment, there was a ruling made in the house earlier this session—I will not say on the same question but on a similar question—at which time it was ruled that there should not be an adjournment.

Hon. members know, and I have said this before, that it is only in extreme circumstances that an adjournment is granted. It has not happened more than a very few times in many years that the business of the house has been adjourned. It may well be that this is a type of question which justifies an adjournment, but I have before me a motion in particular circumstances and I do not think that I can grant it in view of these circumstances.

One point I would like to bring to the attention of hon. members is citation 100 (9) of Beauchesne's fourth edition, as recorded at page 91 of that work, which states:

—matters of privilege or order, or matters debatable only upon a substantive motion, cannot be submitted to the house under this standing order.

If the hon. member is right then he has a question of privilege, and according to this citation the Chair cannot grant an adjournment of the house to consider a matter which the hon. member says is a question of privilege and, as he has said himself, there has been no ruling from the Chair to the effect that there was no question of privilege.

The ruling was based on the point that the question had not been raised on the earliest possible occasion. In view of this I cannot