

*Ministerial Conduct*

Am I to understand from Your Honour's ruling that the two ministers in question may make statements on the matter of urgency, and will Your Honour also allow other members of the house to make statements following the ministers' statements?

**Mr. Churchill:** That will have to be allowed, if it is under privilege.

**Mr. Speaker:** I do think the hon. member is asking for quite a bit. It is the wish of the Chair to have an explanation this morning from the two ministers concerned and not to continue with a long debate unless it be necessary. My particular problem is to reach a decision on whether the house should be adjourned under standing order 26. In view of the latitude given this morning and in fairness to the two persons charged—informally, if you wish—they should at least have the opportunity of making short statements. I think those statements should be made before rendering a decision as to whether standing order 26 is to be applied. If the house would give consent for those statements to be made now it would be of material assistance to the Chair; but I am in the hands of the house, of course. Does the house give consent?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. Members:** One o'clock.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the house give consent?

**Mr. Churchill:** Mr. Speaker, the minister himself called it one o'clock.

**Mr. Speaker:** It being one o'clock I do now leave the chair.

At one o'clock the house took recess.

**AFTER RECESS**

The house resumed at 2.30 p.m.

**Mr. Speaker:** This morning when the house recessed for lunch we had certain matters under discussion, and I think it might be useful if I gave my view at this moment not on the principal question whether or not the house should adjourn but on the question whether or not hon. members are entitled to make remarks for the benefit of the Chair. I do not necessarily mean statements; I mean remarks to assist the Chair in arriving at a conclusion.

This morning reference was made to standing order 26 to which a revision has been made this session as a result of a suggestion

[Mr. Douglas.]

by the committee on procedure and organization, and I think it might be useful to refer to it at this moment. Standing order 26 (3) reads:

He then hands a written statement of the matter proposed to be discussed to Mr. Speaker. If Mr. Speaker questions the urgency of debate with respect to the proposed matter, he may invite members to speak on the question of such urgency.

It then goes on to refer to other matters, but the point is that the Speaker "may" invite members—which is only right, of course—to assist him in trying to arrive at a proper conclusion.

In virtue of that, this morning several members gave the Chair the benefit of their views, which were in fact quite extensive. The matter under discussion should have related to urgency and in some cases it went far beyond that and related to the substance; but no matter, several hon. members did have the opportunity of assisting the Chair. So it seems to me that the Chair should extend the same privilege to other members, within reason. The privilege should not be abused, but the Chair is entitled, within reason, to call upon other members of the house for their views—again I stress the point; not statements, but views—as to the urgency of the matter.

Therefore I propose to extend the same privilege to the Secretary of State (Mr. Lamontagne), not for the purpose of having him make a formal statement, but for the purpose of allowing him to present his views for the assistance of the Chair. I think it is only a matter of common right and justice that he should, within reason, have the same latitude which was extended to other hon. members this morning.

**Mr. Bert Leboe (Cariboo):** Mr. Speaker, I am in a little difficulty here on several counts. First of all, the Secretary of State (Mr. Lamontagne) did rise and say he wanted to speak on a question of privilege. He also said he had a prepared statement, which you, Mr. Speaker, could not have known about. It seems to me that if the hon. gentleman wants to rise on a question of privilege and so state, then you, Mr. Speaker, must hear that question of privilege before you decide it, and by that time it will be on the record. This has been going on in the house for years.

I find difficulty in allowing this type of statement to be made when we are under the impression, and I think rightly so, that the minister had a prepared statement when he came into the house. Under the circumstances, I believe that if he wants to make a statement