

Administration of Justice

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the hon. member would—

Mr. Churchill: Mr. Speaker, I welcome your public admonition regarding something that happened the other day, but I hope you will add the name of the Minister of National Health and Welfare to this salutary admonition which you have uttered tonight.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I did not admonish the hon. gentleman in any way. I made an admission of ignorance on the part of your Speaker in that I wondered at the time whether the procedure followed should have been allowed. During the intervening days I have had an opportunity to look into the matter and I have satisfied myself that we should discuss and consider one question of privilege at a time.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, I will conclude in just a moment. I have raised certain matters which obviously are not welcomed by hon. gentlemen opposite. But I raise them in all seriousness as matters which we think should be included in the terms of reference or as alterations that should be made to those terms in order that we may have a thorough and impartial inquiry into this whole situation. We are anxious to have such an important and thorough inquiry made on a proper basis. We are prepared to join with members of other parties of this house in an attempt to work out such a set of terms of reference in order that an inquiry may proceed with all possible speed so that parliament may be allowed to get on with its business.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Speaker, I am rising merely to give a personal explanation in respect of certain of the hon. member's statements.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member can, of course, speak on the question of privilege which has been raised and I recognize him for that purpose.

Mr. Pickersgill: I will take only a few moments, sir. If this woman was admitted in 1955, as I am informed by the hon. gentleman she was, then I was the minister. I admit that at once as being a matter of record.

Mr. Fulton: I made no accusation against you in that regard. You are the one who is making the accusation.

[Mr. Speaker.]

Mr. Pickersgill: The hon. member thought I was embarrassed. I was not in the least embarrassed. What I really rose to do was to ask if the hon. gentleman when he was considering this file, discovered whether or not this woman, who if she was admitted in 1955, by 1960 would in the normal course have been eligible for citizenship, ever applied for citizenship, whether she got citizenship and, if she did not get citizenship, why she did not?

Mr. Fulton: I do not recall, Mr. Speaker. The answers to those questions are all available to the hon. gentleman at this stage. I am only appalled that he did not ask the questions and get the answers before hon. members on his side of the house unleashed this appalling campaign in this country.

Mr. Pickersgill: I wanted to know whether the hon. gentleman knew the answers to my questions.

Mr. Fulton: Yes, I did know. I satisfied myself as to the background of this matter before I dealt with the file, unlike hon. gentlemen opposite.

Mr. Matheson: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the hon. member for Kamloops whether the Munsinger file is in his hands—

An hon. Member: Who wrote your question out for you?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. H. A. Olson (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, I am not completely clear about the question of privilege we are discussing at this moment. I say that because there is now some kind of attempt being made to set up a judicial inquiry to settle a question of privilege affecting members, which is a new departure from the ordinary method of handling such a situation. There is no precedent for this action in this house or in the British house so far as I could ascertain by my research.

I am particularly concerned about the terms of reference contained in the Order in Council. Until and unless the house agrees to refer this question of privilege to a royal commission or judicial body outside the house or the extensions of this house, which has never occurred in a case of this type in the past, there is only one place where it can be settled. A question of personal privilege must be settled by this house or by an extension of this house, such as the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.