

Non-Confidence in Deputy Speaker

This motion calls on the house to condemn the hon. member for Stormont, in his capacity as presiding officer, sitting in the chair of His Honour the Speaker when the house was dealing on Friday night with perhaps the most important matter that has come to it in a long time.

The right hon. gentleman said that if there was an error, the error was that of the government. I hope he will permit me to say, as sincerely as he did, that the error, if there was an error—and I am not prepared to admit fully that there was—was an error shared by every hon. member of the house, including the right hon. gentleman himself.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Martineau: Explain.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I will explain, because the Prime Minister said at eight o'clock on Friday night last, as recorded at page 910 of *Hansard*:

By leave. I wish to move, seconded by my colleague the Secretary of State for External Affairs—a motion which would have permitted us to contribute to the international force in Cyprus. Then the Prime Minister went on to say:

In speaking to this resolution I should like to begin by telling the house that while the situation on the island of Cyprus has deteriorated to a point at which there is grave danger of conflict—even greater conflict—

As I have shown, Mr. Speaker, he had gone on speaking for some time when the hon. member for Charlevoix rose and asked:

Do the rules of the house allow the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) to bring forward a motion without having received beforehand the unanimous consent of the house?

Now, there is no obligation in our rules requiring the use of the phrase "with unanimous consent." There is a requirement in our rules, that, in certain instances, no action can be taken by the house without unanimous consent; but if, as in this particular instance, the words used are "by leave", they can have the same implication as "with unanimous consent".

Who is there to argue that the words "by leave" in this context, in this particular situation, did not have the same meaning as the use of the words "with the unanimous consent"? In any event it is clear that the Prime Minister asked "by leave", and no one objected. I am not complaining about the failure to object on the part of anyone. I am not throwing this out as an argument to knock down what the right hon. gentleman has said. I am simply pointing to the fact that, for very good reasons, the great majority in the house felt that it was necessary to proceed.

No one did object, even though any hon. gentleman could have objected. The right hon. gentleman himself might have objected. He would have had time to object. The hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam (Mr. Douglas) would have had time to object. The hon. member for Lapointe (Mr. Gregoire), who objected later, might well have taken steps immediately to object, but he did not; and the hon. member for Charlevoix, who was the first to object, under our rules did not object in time.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Gregoire: Would the hon. gentleman permit a question?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Yes.

Mr. Gregoire: How many seconds does it take for an hon. member to object within sufficient time?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Well, I do not think my response to that would help the hon. gentleman any more than his question helps any one of us to elucidate this difficulty.

The right hon. gentleman stated something a few moments ago which I believe is quite correct. An understanding of the mood of the house is relevant to an appreciation of why the house did not register any particular objection. Why was this? It was because we were faced with a very serious situation. Word had just come from the United Nations that the security council had been advised by the secretary general that an international force was being established; and this house, true to its obligations to the United Nations charter, wanted to act with dispatch. And because we wanted to act with dispatch there was no one who was disposed to object to the Prime Minister's statement: "By leave, I wish to move—" and the following words which he used, except that the hon. member for Lapointe spoke later.

I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that the exchanges recorded in *Hansard* on page 910, and subsequent pages, and on page 892 and subsequent pages at an earlier stage, clearly indicate that what I have said represents the true situation, the correct sequence of events. However, even if it should be assumed that there was an error; or that the rights of minorities were not fully protected, I would ask the house to recall the intervention of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, perhaps as authoritative a student of our procedures as any member of this house.

Mr. Knowles: I will quote that some day.

Mr. Churchill: Let us not re-elect him, now.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Let us remember his comments on citation 41 and, later, on