

Alleged Corruption in Government

gentlemen opposite that we shall expect some far reaching action to be taken by the government when that report is received as well as the report of the R.C.M.P. regarding the case to which reference was made this afternoon by the hon. member for St. Jean-Iberville-Napierville.

We do not think that pressing for a committee of parliament at this time would serve any good purpose, and would only present the spectacle of a parliamentary circus in attempting to wash dirty linen in public. I think that if there is going to be an investigation it ought to be carried out by the judiciary and by persons who can properly assess evidence, examine witnesses under oath and give to this house and the country an unbiased report.

Mr. Nielsen: That isn't what you were saying during the recess.

An hon. Member: Bongo Bob didn't say that, either.

Mr. Douglas: I say, Mr. Speaker, that we will expect the government to give us some explanation as to just what action they intend to take when the evidence of the Dorion commission is before us and the report as to the actions of the R.C.M.P. is available. In the meantime we think that the important thing for the balance of this session is to get on with some very vital legislation, particularly the Canada pension plan and the national labour code, and we would urge that these matters be proceeded with. I can assure the house, however, that the questions that have been raised as a result of the Dorion inquiry are not going to be overlooked and are not going to be allowed to be swept under the rug as far as this party is concerned.

Mr. R. N. Thompson (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, we have before us a motion to adjourn the normal proceedings of the house in order to debate a matter of urgent public importance, and I believe that the question before us, as far as concerns our comments at the present time, relates specifically to this motion. I agree with the explanation that has been given of the reason for making the motion at this time, because certainly across the country—and that just does not mean in a part of the country; it is across the entire country—there is a great deal of concern about what is going on, not only in this parliament but with the government itself, and as to the seriousness of the allegations and the continuing headlines which

indicate that all is not right as far as integrity, public morality and the conduct of our governmental affairs. In this regard I believe it is important that this matter should be fully discussed.

I would say, Mr. Speaker, that I was somewhat confused this afternoon when the former minister without portfolio took up half an hour of the time of this house to give his explanation of why he is not guilty; and how, therefore, the government can expect that it is out of order for us to take up further time to discuss the points which he himself has already raised I do not understand.

Certainly if it was not intended to be discussed in the house, it might have been judicious not to have raised the question in the way it has been raised today.

However, Mr. Speaker, this motion states that its purpose is to consider the setting up of an unrestricted public inquiry into the reasons why we have had all this talk relating to morality and the question of integrity as far as those in public office are concerned, which I think is just a little beyond our scope at the present time, simply because we already have a judicial inquiry, the Dorion commission, investigating many of these charges. To think that we can supersede that commission and discuss the aspects involved in this motion, having regard to the investigation of the Dorion commission, is certainly prejudging the issue, in my opinion, and is beyond the scope of any discussion in the house at this time.

Nevertheless I would agree with the mover of the motion that there is a question of grave national importance, as it relates to those things that are not concerned in the Dorion inquiry and that, because the government has seen fit today to take the lead in initiating this discussion in such a way, certainly other members of the house ought to have an opportunity to speak to it as well. I believe it is in order for us to go on with that discussion at this time, albeit that I fail to understand how we can discuss the setting up of an unrestricted public inquiry while there is a judicial inquiry, such as the Dorion commission, investigating these matters, even as there is an R.C.M.P. investigation with regard to some other charges that have been talked about in public. Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, I believe that this matter should be debated and that the government themselves have asked for this discussion because of the action they have taken today.