

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), to move the adjournment of the House under Standing Order 26 for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely, the release on Friday of the Le Dain Commission's interim report on the non-medical use of drugs, the apparent contradictions in statements by cabinet ministers, and the urgent need for clear and explicit government policy in order to avoid immediately a major crisis in Canadian courts and in every major city in Canada this summer.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member has given me the required notice of his intention to request leave to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing the matter stated by him. In the interim, I have given very serious consideration to the several aspects of the question raised for debate.

It does seem to me that the matter raised by the hon. member is important and of wide and current interest, but I must concern myself with the question as to whether his proposal meets with the requirements of Standing Order 26. Essentially, I believe that the matter referred to by the hon. member can be resolved only by legislation. It might be that a debate at this time could do much to develop and clarify the thinking of hon. members in regard to a possible alteration of the criminal law of the country, but it seems to me that since the question is a matter of legislation rather than one which relates to the administration of government, it fails to qualify under the terms of Standing Order 26.

On the other hand if the hon. member's request is directed primarily to the apparent contradictions in statements by ministers of the Crown, I suggest that other means and methods may be used, which are available to hon. members, for the purpose of obtaining a clarification of such statements. For the reasons stated, I must say with regret that the hon. member's proposed motion should not be placed before the House at this time.

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD****DRUGS****MARIJUANA—REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION OF GOVERNMENT POSITION—DIRECTIONS TO CROWN PROSECUTORS**

**Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Prime Minister a question arising out of

what, it is now clear, was a non-statement by the Minister of National Health and Welfare in the House on Friday last. At that time the minister simply said that the government was giving consideration to acting upon one recommendation of the LeDain Commission, that is not to legalize the possession of marijuana but to lighten the penalty.

I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether we can expect an early decision with regard to this matter. I ask this in the hope that the enthusiasm of the minister outside the House may at least result in prophecy, although it was not strictly accurate on that occasion.

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I take note that the Leader of the Opposition, in speaking for his party, says that the minister's enthusiasm should result in prophecy. As far as we are concerned, our position was stated in the House on Friday and it remains the same.

**An hon. Member:** There were two positions.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Mr. Speaker, there was nothing ambiguous about my position in speaking for the party on Friday and I hoped it would encourage the Prime Minister to make a statement. In view of the doubt that now exists with regard to what decision the government will reach, and the vast number of Canadians who are concerned and who will be affected by the eventual decision, I ask the Prime Minister whether he will give the House the assurance that he will make an early announcement.

I remind him, sir, that he kept this report within the circle of the government for several weeks so that he could deal with this sort of situation. I ask him if he will not give the House the assurance of a very early statement in order to remove the confusion and concern that is bound to exist in the country in the light of the non-statement made by the Minister of Health and Welfare in the House on Friday last.

**Mr. Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, the indignation of the Leader of the Opposition moves me. I must say that making a statement would not change the law, and he must know this. Our statement was made on Friday and it remains the same. The minister explained, as he entered the House, that it remained the same. That was our position. The Leader of the Opposition knows very well that by making any kind of statement we could not change the law as it stands. The Minister of Justice