

Ministerial Conduct

Mr. Pickersgill: May I also suggest, sir—and I hope I will be listened to as the right hon. gentleman was listened to, and not howled down—that hon. members opposite, having made a motion about these two ministers, having made a number of statements about them which they culled from the newspapers and so on, ordinary, elementary justice demands that the two ministers be allowed to make a factual statement of their own position; and that you, sir, cannot properly decide whether this is an urgent matter until we have heard those two hon. gentlemen.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Speaker, this is the most amazing suggestion I have ever heard.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Douglas: The Minister of Transport is suggesting that under the guise of debating urgency two ministers be allowed to make statements which they cannot properly make unless the motion is allowed. I agree that in justice both these ministers should be allowed to make statements. I would go further. In view of the fact that they have both made statements outside this house, they should be required to make statements in the house.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Douglas: The only way they can properly make those statements is not under the guise of arguing urgency, but for Your Honour to allow the motion, allow them to make their statements and allow the contribution any other hon. member wants to make in the course of the debate.

Mr. H. A. Olson (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, I think the argument that has just been made by the Minister of Transport makes it abundantly clear that there is urgency of debate. I think the request made by one of the persons named in the motion, namely the Secretary of State, that he should be given an opportunity to make an explanation is in itself an indication that there is urgency of debate.

The Prime Minister argued that there is a need for someone to make a charge. I agreed with him yesterday that when a motion is moved on a question of privilege the member concerned is then—if there is a question of privilege or a prima facie case established—obliged to follow up with a substantive motion containing a charge. The motion yesterday of course did not have a charge in it, but it is a completely different matter to move the adjournment of the house under

standing order 26, which is the proposition that is before us this afternoon.

Therefore I think the fact that the Secretary of State and the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration apparently feel they ought to make statements and ought to make explanations in this house because of certain latitude of discussion that has already taken place is sufficient argument to allow the debate to take place.

Mr. Speaker: I think I can say without hesitation that the matter is not without a certain amount of difficulty; but as Speaker I am bound by form, precedent and also, I hope, a sense of fairness and justice. Before giving this ruling I would say that I do think it is in the interests of the house that a short explanation be given by the two ministers concerned, particularly in view of the wide latitude given this morning to the right hon. Prime Minister, the right hon. Leader of the Opposition and even, if I may say so, the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam and others. Therefore I think it is in the interests of fair play and justice that not necessarily a statement but certainly an explanation be given by the two ministers concerned.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Some hon. Members: One o'clock.

Mr. McIlraith: Mr. Speaker, in view of the hope that I expressed last night, I wonder if we could agree to sit through the lunch hour—

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. McIlraith: —for the purpose of carrying out that hope.

Some hon. Members: One o'clock.

Mr. Howard: Mr. Speaker, it would be much better if we sat at the dinner table instead of sitting through this muck-raking.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Speaker, we would prefer that you call it one o'clock, because this will enable us to consider the ruling you have just made, for, in my opinion, your decision is one which we will appeal.

[*Text*]

Some hon. Members: One o'clock.

Mr. Lamontagne: Mr. Speaker, may I call it one o'clock?

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Speaker, before Your Honour leaves the chair may I ask a question.