

Administration of Justice

Hon. R. A. Bell (Carleton): Mr. Speaker, when you ruled earlier today on various motions which had been presented Your Honour did not deal with the motion which I outlined and which I indicated my willingness to present, the general text of which appears at page 2520 of *Hansard* of last evening. I think it is common ground on all sides of the house that a motion might be presented to refer this whole matter to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections and that this would be in order. It is, equally, common ground that this would probably not be a satisfactory course. The Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. MacEachen) has described it as futile. I think it was the Prime Minister who suggested it might lead to a donnybrook. In any event, I think it is common ground on all sides of the house that a reference to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections would not be satisfactory.

● (2:10 p.m.)

But, sir, my submission to you is that if a reference to a standing committee of the house would be in order then inevitably so must a reference to the committee of the whole be in order, and it is such a motion that I want to place before the house now. The motion I propose to move—I regret it is only in my own handwriting—seconded by the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona (Mr. Nugent) is:

That the house do now resolve itself into committee of the whole in order that hon. members may have an opportunity to examine the Minister of Justice so that he may advise the committee what evidence he has to substantiate the charges made inside and outside this chamber which have reflected upon members of Her Majesty's Privy Council.

Sir, before you put it to the house may I just add these additional comments. My submission to you is that if this matter of privilege can be referred to a standing committee then obviously it can be referred to the committee of the whole of this high court of parliament itself. I suggest to you, sir, that this is the technique whereby we can reach finality in this matter this day.

I personally am sick at heart at this spectacle in parliament which I believe is the most wonderful democratic institution in the world. I say it is time we returned to dignity, honour and the conduct of gentlemen. The Minister of Justice of this country has become the minister of injustice. He has degraded parliament and the Prime Minister has become an accomplice after the fact. My

[Mr. Speaker.]

motion will bring this whole sordid business to an end and bring it to an end this day, and the man who sits over there will stand up, speak up, or shut up.

Mr. McIlraith: On the matter of receiving this motion, Mr. Speaker, and on that only, may I point out that a motion has been presented by the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert), which has not been disposed of.

Mr. Bell (Carleton): It has.

Mr. McIlraith: I am sorry; I was mistaken. I intended raising a narrow point and I reserve the right to raise a question as to the propriety of this motion after it is put.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Caouette: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I think you have given your ruling on the motion presented by the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert), even before reading it.

The house leader was probably not here then, but the motion was certainly dealt with exactly like the previous motions.

Mr. Speaker: That is correct. The motion had been judged out of order. We now have before us the motion put forward by the hon. member for Carleton (Mr. Bell).

[*English*]

The house has before it a motion moved by the hon. member for Carleton which I will read as I understand hon. members, and in particular the Minister of Public Works, want to comment on it. It is moved by the hon. member for Carleton, seconded by the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona:

That the house do now resolve itself into committee of the whole in order that hon. members may have an opportunity to examine the Minister of Justice so that he may advise the committee what evidence he has to substantiate the charges made inside and outside this chamber which have reflected upon members of Her Majesty's Privy Council.

Mr. McIlraith: Mr. Speaker, it must be obvious that this motion is a reference to the inquisition hon. members were speaking about a few minutes ago. It seems to me that what is being attempted here by hon. members, who were so anxious to protect the rights of hon. members, is to have the authority of a motion to conduct an inquisition on their part. If they propose any action against the Minister of Justice surely they must take the responsibility in the traditional way and make charges against him. When they make charges, then those charges can be investigated.