

bill which will define with some degree of accuracy what information can be given and what information is to be forbidden? That is the only way in which there can be a satisfactory conclusion to this issue.

Third, does the government intend to be the sole arbiter of what the public, parliament and the press can be trusted with in the line of facts, or will it leave that to legislation which this House will pass?

Will the government House leader answer the first question I raised, whether it is the categorical assertion of the government that civil servants can be forbidden the right to appear before a parliamentary committee at the whim and discretion of a cabinet minister or of the Prime Minister?

The Deputy Chairman: Just before recognizing the President of the Privy Council I wish to draw to the attention of members of the committee that the rules that we have adopted for this committee call for a summing up by the minister and by a spokesman for the opposition. I wish to seek the guidance of the committee as to whether this part of the rules which was adopted earlier is to be waived, or whether the committee wishes to abide by it?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Chairman, on the particular question you have asked let me say that in view of the fact that the Prime Minister made a statement at the opening, which was not provided when we had the Minister of Transport before us, I would certainly not ask for the right to sum up at the end, but I would like to answer the questions that have been put to me.

Mr. Baldwin: May I say I agree with the President of the Privy Council, but for another reason. The day we were dealing with the transport estimates we made an interim House order regarding the length of speeches which were to be in units of 15 minutes. Another issue was the right to sum up. When today my friend, the hon. member for Rocky Mountain, dealt with this he left completely out of the proposal the question of summing up. That was not intended and is not part of the arrangements made, and I think the President of the Privy Council confirms that.

● (2120)

The Deputy Chairman: For earlier proceedings these were the rules adopted. Is it agreed that this part of the rules be waived?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Chairman, I will attempt to deal briefly with some of the questions put by the hon. House leader of the official opposition. First I would like to say a word about the speech given by the Prime Minister at the outset today. Listening to him I felt that this was finally an opportunity for the Prime Minister to deal with the issues which had been raised on so many occasions across the floor of the House by the hon. member for Leeds and the hon. member for Rocky Mountain, and to which the Prime Minister never had a previous opportunity to reply.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Business of Supply

Mr. Sharp: I thought he used the time to excellent advantage, and if there were complaints about it I suggest to hon. members opposite that if they are interested in the office of the Prime Minister, and not in the trivia of the chandeliers and ashtrays, they should not ask so many bloody questions about them.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Baldwin: Who raised it first?

Mr. Stanfield: Your credibility is zero.

An hon. Member: That speech was a direct contradiction to the understanding, and you know it.

Mr. Sharp: When there are trivia in questions I think it does the opposition good to see how much time they wasted and how much time the Prime Minister had to waste today in answering these silly questions.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): If that is your attitude, you've had it.

Mr. Stanfield: You are through.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): We've played games with you long enough.

Mr. Clark: Does your word mean anything?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Sharp: The question of officials is a major one which certainly is worth a little consideration. There are different ways of looking at this question. We on the government side feel that the ministers have responsibility both for policy generally and for the administration of affairs. Therefore in asking officials to come before committees for cross-examination, the question arises as to who is responsible. Is it the official, or is it the minister? We have taken the view, and it has certainly been pressed upon us, that when officials do things or do not do things, it is the minister who takes responsibility, not the officials. It is possible to separate these matters, but if officials can be brought before the House and cross-examined, of course one must relieve the minister of the responsibility for their actions.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Tommyrot.

Mr. Sharp: Members of the opposition must make up their minds which way they want the argument to run. Do they want ministers to be responsible for administration and policy, or do they want to relieve us of part of the administrative responsibility? This is the argument going on in the United Kingdom today.

Mr. Baldwin: Charles I lost his head over that.

Mr. Muir: You are going to lose yours, Mitch.

An hon. Member: To the Senate, Mitch.

Mr. Sharp: There is a separate question which has been raised by the House leader of the official opposition, and