

RCMP

questions during the question period, which would have been, to me, an affront to the members of this House in pursuing their proper obligations here.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: I have said in the past many times—and I made it clear in the recent work of our Standing Committee on Rights and Immunities of Members in coming to a clear definition of the sub judge convention as it applies here—that any interference with discussion, questioning or debate in this chamber on the basis of matters being before the courts ought to be done only on the very strictest interpretation of that convention, and only upon the argument being carried before the Chair that some decision by a judicial body not only is about to be made but, in fact, is about to be made and might be prejudiced by the proceedings, debate or discussion in this House, which is certainly not the circumstance here.

Therefore, taking all the circumstances into consideration, again I say that the matter is proper to be discussed. The procedure which follows now is one which we have faced many times in the past. I repeat that this matter was put forward initially by the Leader of the Opposition, and shortly thereafter by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby. With the consent of the House I would, therefore, want to consider that when the question is put, it ought to be shown as being put by the Leader of the Opposition and seconded by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby. In the circumstances, I think that would be fair.

Technically, the procedure is to ask the House whether consent exists to put the question. If consent is not forthcoming, it takes only 20 members to support the putting of the motion. In the circumstances, it seems to me that that would be forthcoming. Therefore, I might assume that consent will be forthcoming and that the motion ought to be put.

The only remaining consideration is for the Chair to decide when the debate will take place. I have two choices open to me. One is to defer a decision until tomorrow. The second is to order the debate to take place at eight o'clock tonight. I see no reason to entertain argument or discussion in using this rule. It is on the books for this purpose. The matter is urgent and worthy of immediate consideration, and I think the debate should take place at eight o'clock tonight.

● (1522)

Mr. Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, may I draw your attention to subparagraph (9) of the rule, which states as follows:

If it is determined that the member may proceed, the motion shall stand over until 8.00 o'clock p.m. on that day, provided that Mr. Speaker, at his discretion, may direct that the motion shall be set down for consideration on the following sitting day at an hour specified by him.

My question to you is this. Because it is within your discretion, and because a very key element in this whole debate is the participation of the individual, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), who is not here today but could possibly be back here tomorrow by this time, for debate in this House tomorrow, would it be possible, until we can ascertain if the Prime

[Mr. Speaker.]

Minister can be back for the debate, for Your Honour to defer your ruling on when the debate should take place?

If it is possible for the Prime Minister to be back by eight o'clock tonight, perhaps we should have the debate tonight. But if it is possible that he will not be back until tomorrow afternoon, in your discretion could you rule that the debate could be held tomorrow afternoon, because it is essential that he be here?

Mr. Speaker: Order please. I have heard the application and I have dealt with it. If I had been met with an application on behalf of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) of his desire to participate, I might have looked at this application in a different light. I have been asked to set up a debate pursuant to Standing Order 26. I have acceded to that request, and in pursuance of the Standing Order I have ordered that it take place tonight. The Minister of Labour (Mr. Munro).

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to indicate that I have been endeavouring to catch your eye for some time, although I recognize why it was quite impossible in the circumstances. The government is quite prepared to go along with the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark), seconded by the leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent). That should be known when seeking the consent which you have just indicated, although I must say it is the view of the government that in the question period the Solicitor General acquitted himself superbly.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The consent of the House having determined that the matter is proper to be discussed, subject to the application of the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby, and consent of the House having been sought and obtained, the debate on the motion moved by the hon. Leader of the Opposition and seconded by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby will take place at eight o'clock tonight.

Orders of the day.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

AMENDMENT OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS

Hon. Norman A. Cafik (Minister of State (Multiculturalism)) (for Mr. MacEachen) moved that Bill C-5, to amend the Canada Elections Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the proposed amendments contained in Bill C-5 which we are now considering can be dealt with under three main headings: First, amendments respecting the registration of political parties and other election expenses provisions of the Canada Elections Act; second, amendments