

Motion for Adjournment

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Cape Breton South is rising on a point of order.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): Mr. Speaker, the minister is now deliberately ignoring the rule about which you have just reminded him and others, that he must speak only as to the urgency of debate.

While he is on his feet perhaps he would like to make a charge of slander and innuendo against the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona. Will he make that charge? Will he stand up as the hon. member has done in this house? If he does not intend to do so, then let him speak about the urgency of debate.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Let me remind the hon. member that he should address the Chair.

Mr. Hellyer: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has made suggestions which involve my personal honour, and for that reason I am perhaps more interested in this question than anyone else in this house. For that reason I feel that this question should be dealt with by that committee in the proper form and manner rather than by a debate in this house which could make no determination or decision.

An hon. Member: If you are so innocent, let us debate it now.

Mr. Hellyer: This is not the time or the manner in which we should debate a serious allegation of this kind. I think it should be considered by the committee, and I hope that at that time, if the alleged facts presented to this house today are proved to be false, the hon. member will resign his seat in the House of Commons.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Nugent: I take full responsibility for my charge and I hope the minister will realize the importance of my proving it.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The minister has the floor.

Mr. Hellyer: As far as I am personally concerned, this matter can be dealt with by either committee. My only reason for suggesting that it be dealt with by the defence committee is that there are related matters which should be dealt with at the same time.

I believe that those people who have made charges, including the hon. gentleman opposite, should appear before that committee to give testimony and to subject themselves to cross-examination in order that we may make clear to the people of this country the exact nature of these charges.

Mr. Horner (Acadia): In order that you may tamper with the testimony.

Mr. Hellyer: Under those circumstances, Mr. Speaker, and because this matter is some months old, I think a debate this afternoon would be inadequate.

Mr. Kindt: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of personal privilege.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Macleod is rising on a question of privilege.

Mr. Kindt: I suggest that the minister is trying to mislead the house by suggesting that this matter is some months old. We have heard what the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona said, namely that he did not have this information until yesterday or the day before. Apparently the only one who knew about it, prior to then other than the admiral, was the minister.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It is my opinion that there is no question of personal privilege at this time.

Mr. Kindt: There certainly is.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair is charged with the difficult responsibility of ruling on this matter, and it is my opinion that there is no question of privilege.

Mr. Kindt: Mr. Speaker,—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest to the hon. member that what he is now attempting is to present an argument. I assume that in due course he will have the opportunity of doing so. At the moment the Minister of National Defence has the floor.

Mr. Hellyer: Mr. Speaker, the suggestion on which the allegation is based was made in July and has been public knowledge since that time. In view of the fact that this matter has been discussed in the press and in this house on a number of occasions since July and in view of its serious nature, it is my belief it should be dealt with by a committee of this house. The committee which I believe