

Columbia River Agreement

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: Order. If the Secretary of State for External Affairs disagrees with the statement made, perhaps he would indicate what he thinks is the scope of his contribution at this time, and then I could deal with it.

Mr. Green: Mr. Speaker, I disagree with nearly everything the hon. member for Essex East says. His trouble is that he just cannot take his medicine.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Benidickson: That is no answer.

Mr. Speaker: Order. May I say, in an effort to clarify the extent of the discussion, that I am trying to obtain the assistance of the house in the decision which I have to make as to the urgency of debate regarding the matter which the Leader of the Opposition has asked leave to debate. It is only because the Leader of the Opposition made a statement which, as I indicated at the time, was not relevant to that issue—I refer to the statement with respect to the dismissal of the chairman—that I have allowed the contradiction to take place. I trust that the Secretary of State for External Affairs will hasten to deal with that part of the question and get on to the issue of urgency of debate.

Mr. Green: Mr. Speaker, in the case of General McNaughton the term was extended for approximately two months—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

An hon. Member: Surely this is not relevant.

Mr. Green:—in order to enable him to attend the fiftieth anniversary meeting of the commission—

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Pearson: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the same point of order?

Mr. Pearson: My point of order is that when I rose I said, "leaving aside the circumstances surrounding General McNaughton's dismissal", and Your Honour stopped me. The Secretary of State for External Affairs is now attempting to debate those circumstances. Surely he is not going to be permitted to go into the details of the matter without Your Honour giving me the same opportunity.

Mr. Speaker: I would think it would be highly improper to spend time at this stage debating the circumstances of the termination or the present employment of the chairman

[Mr. Martin (Essex East).]

of the international joint commission, and even if the leave which is asked for were given I would consider it out of order to debate that issue. I feel that if the Secretary of State for External Affairs makes a simple denial of the statement that was volunteered we should drop the matter there and proceed to determine whether the house wishes to debate this issue.

Mr. Green: Mr. Speaker, statements have been made to the effect that prior to the signing of the so-called Columbia river treaty General McNaughton had dissociated himself from that treaty and had advised against signing it.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order—

An hon. Member: Sit down.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, the fact that we are nearing the dissolution of parliament is no justification for any minister of the crown to so flagrantly violate the rules which has been done here today. Four times the Secretary of State for External Affairs was called to order but he continues to introduce material which is not relevant to the issue before us.

Mr. Benidickson: He is reading every word of a prepared statement.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Perhaps the hon. member would state specifically what he complains of.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I am complaining that the Secretary of State for External Affairs, contrary to the ruling which Your Honour has stated three times—

An hon. Member: Four times.

Mr. Martin (Essex East):—has gone on to discuss circumstances having to do with the retirement of General McNaughton from the chairmanship of the international joint commission. I repeat, Mr. Speaker—and I do this knowing how much we are in Your Honour's debt for the way in which you have adjudicated over our proceedings—that the only issue before us is whether we are entitled to debate this as a matter of urgency. Obviously the Secretary of State for External Affairs is not addressing himself to this point. With great respect I say that the minister ought to be told that unless he does address himself to this one point, Your Honour does not propose to allow him to continue. That is the course which Your Honour took with regard to the Leader of the Opposition, and quite properly so. The one issue before us is, is this matter one of urgency? Is it of the same category, for instance, as the Coyne-Fleming dispute? I believe it is and—