

from the House of Commons to a committee while the case is *sub judice*. That does not add up.

Mr. JOHNSTON: That was the suggestion of the Minister of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. MITCHELL: Some of my hon. friends who are applauding loudest are prejudging this question.

Mr. ADAMSON: We are not prejudging the question. I love the Minister of Labour; I just adore him, he is so charmingly illogical. I have listened carefully to the argument tonight and all we are trying to do is this. We say that the government has a responsibility toward these veterans, and the Department of Veterans Affairs has a responsibility toward these veterans entirely irrespective—

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. Is the hon. member speaking to a point of order?

Mr. ADAMSON: Yes, Mr. Speaker. There is a definite point of order which the Minister of Veterans Affairs has raised as to this discussion being out of order because the case is *sub judice*. The question raised by the hon. member for Hastings-Peterborough (Mr. White) has nothing to do with the courts. The point he is bringing out is that the Department of Veterans Affairs has a responsibility toward these veterans, absolutely separate from any court proceedings taking place in Montreal. That is the question before the house, and I submit, sir, that it is entirely in order.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: So long as hon. members confine their remarks to veterans affairs and refrain from references either to the civil action or to the criminal proceedings, they may continue to discuss the subject. I think hon. members will realize the difficult position in which the Speaker finds himself. The debate has gone on for some time and I am not altogether satisfied that it has been quite in order, but I would ask hon. members to cooperate and endeavour not to discuss the matter in any way that will relate it to the court proceedings.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I appreciate your difficulty, Mr. Speaker, and I wish to have my remarks conform to the rules, but we have the minister calling me to order and asking you to make a ruling because I said that this matter should not be sent to a committee, and then we have the Minister of Labour saying that I am out of order and asking for another ruling on the ground that it should not be sent to the committee. You are indeed in a difficult position. I did not make either of those suggestions.

[Mr. Mitchell.]

An hon. MEMBER: Who did?

Mr. JOHNSTON: The Minister of Veterans Affairs suggested that it should go to the committee and the Minister of Labour said that it should not, and both said that I was out of order because I said that it should not go to the committee at this time. There would be less discussion if the two ministers would get together and decide what to do. I did say, Mr. Speaker, that I thought the situation was too serious for the government to send it to the public accounts committee, thereby putting the responsibility on a committee of this house. I think the government definitely showed their responsibility in this connection when, first they discharged these men and, second, when they caused the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to make an investigation. I suggest that, in all fairness to the veterans concerned and to the Department of Veterans Affairs as well, the government should make an investigation of their own, and not a parliamentary committee investigation. They should make the decision and, if that decision is not satisfactory to both parties, then it will be time—that would be the opportune time—to have the whole matter referred to the public accounts committee for further investigation.

Mr. JOHN T. HACKETT (Stanstead): Mr. Speaker, sometimes when I attempt to address the house appeals are made to you to restrain me from speaking, but I hope that this evening the topic of my observations will be free from controversy. You have been asked to preclude this debate from going farther because there is a case before the courts of Montreal. I have learned from the public journals that there is a case in the criminal courts and in the civil courts, but that is not the case concerning which I now wish to say a few words. My observations will be directed to the case of the veterans against the department of my right hon. friend (Mr. Mackenzie). No such case is before the courts.

There are some subjects, as you well know, Mr. Speaker, concerning which the right hon. gentleman and I cannot always agree. Politics is one of them. But I must say that I have never been to the minister with a question in which the veterans were concerned when I did not have a sympathetic hearing and did not get all that it was humanly possible for him to do.

It is not my function to advise either the government or the house as to the legal rights of veterans against the department. At law—and I see that the solicitor general was