

Mr. SPEAKER: My understanding was that the Prime Minister was making his statement, and that any hon. member in making his speech at a later time might ask questions of the Prime Minister, to which he would reply in closing the debate on the resolution. From the Prime Minister's remarks to-day I gather that that is in accord with my understanding. I must point out to the house however that the Prime Minister, the leader of the house, cannot make the rules of debate. For that reason I wish to have the matter clarified now.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: What I said yesterday is clear, as it appears in *Hansard*. This is what I said:

My hon. friend asked me about questions. In speaking on the motion I should like to speak without interruption, and to be allowed to complete what I have to say. Then I would suggest that if there are any points I have not covered, points upon which hon. members might seek enlightenment or further information, and upon which they would wish me to elucidate they might mention them when they speak, giving me an opportunity to deal with such matters in my reply at the close of the debate. If my replies are not satisfactory I shall try to find some means of gaining assistance and making such further detailed replies as may be requested.

I was making it clear there that, in discussing a great subject such as this, I could hardly be expected to answer instantaneously all questions that might be asked. For any difficult technical questions I might wish to consult or have with me officials of the department, before making reply. But I have not proposed at any time that we should change the rules of debate or change the rules of the house in connection with the presentation of a resolution. My proposal to-day was that, instead of being interrupted, I might be permitted to proceed. Then, if hon. members would be kind enough not to interrupt, if there was something I had not made perfectly clear I would then be prepared later on, when I finished speaking, to endeavour to answer questions. If at that time I did not give immediate answer I would make answer respecting it at the appropriate moment.

Mr. GRAYDON: I take it that we may ask questions, without getting into difficulty so far as the house is concerned, by obtaining unanimous consent.

Some hon. MEMBERS: No, no.

Mr. GRAYDON: Well, I am going to ask for unanimous consent; and if I am refused unanimous consent to ask the Prime Minister

certain questions with respect to this matter, then the house can take the responsibility. I do not think the Prime Minister would be the one who would refuse me.

Mr. COLDWELL: I am suggesting that so far as possible we should follow the rules of the house. If questions are going to be asked, then they should be questions and should not be ten-minute speeches, as we heard a few moments ago. I say that because those of us who wish to participate in the debate, while we are not being deprived of the opportunity to speak, find that we must wait while a number of short speeches are being made. So far as that is concerned, I should like to make a dozen speeches on this matter.

I have no objection to questions. But as a member who is prepared to speak I suggest the rules of the house should be observed as closely as possible, having due regard to the invitation extended by the Prime Minister.

Mr. BOUCHER: There should be no objection to waiting until the question is asked.

Mr. COLDWELL: I am not making any objection to questions, I am objecting to privileged speeches being made.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Prime Minister stated that if desired by any hon. member questions might be asked during his speech and he would deal with them when he replied in closing the debate. To reduce this debate to the standing of a committee of the whole when considering a resolution of this importance would be contrary to the rules of the house. I take it that when the member who speaks asks a question, it will be answered later by the Prime Minister.

Mr. GRAYDON: On a point of order, I have tried to be fairly calm this session with respect to the whole situation. I want to be fair, but this is the last straw. I do not want to cast any reflection upon the Speaker, but it does seem to me that if this is going to go any farther our rights will be gradually diminished to the point where we will no longer be a parliament. I cannot make this too strong. The Prime Minister read a statement which he made yesterday, but that statement is not made by the Prime Minister to-day. He gave us the right of asking certain questions by way of clarification.

An hon. MEMBER: Go on and ask them.

Mr. GRAYDON: I think this government, which is now a minority administration, had better be careful how it deals with the majority. Will the Prime Minister not clarify this