

Defence Production Act

Mr. Green: I say that for this reason if for no other. The Prime Minister was in the house this evening for a period, and now he has gone out.

Mr. McIlraith: Just like the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Green: He had an opportunity this evening to take part in the debate.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The mere fact that an hon. member does or does not participate in a debate or the fact that he is in the house or goes out of the house is not a matter which should be raised as a point of order. We have the right to speak, but we also have the right to listen in this house. It does not necessarily follow that one must speak. Hon. members are supposed to make their remarks relevant to the principle of this bill. The hon. member for Dufferin-Simcoe not only asked why the Prime Minister did not speak, but mentioned all the ministers who were then present in the house. The hon. member recalls that. If he looks at page 4540 of *Hansard* he will see that appeal was made not only to the Prime Minister but to all the ministers who were then present. The hon. member said:

I am surprised that the Prime Minister has not been in the house during this debate. I realize his responsibilities are great, but I can think of no greater responsibility after having moved this motion than to be here to safeguard the rights of parliament which, in the years that have passed, have been championed so often by those who sit to your right.

He made a similar appeal elsewhere. As reported at page 4545 he referred to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Harris) and to the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Pearson), who were then present in the house. Why is there a rule pertaining to repetition if it is not to avoid repetition such as that to which I have just now referred?

As I said, hon. members may look at the pages to which I have referred. I have before me *Hansard* of June 7; that is the day before yesterday. I think the hon. member for Eglinton cannot deny that he made an appeal to the Prime Minister to say something on this matter. He also made a review of the pronouncements of the Prime Minister on a previous occasion when there was discussion of this legislation, when the creation of the department was first proposed to this house.

As I said, if that rule is to mean anything it must be interpreted along the lines I have indicated. Of course, generosity is rather on the side of the member who has the floor because, as I said, it is a rule which it is difficult to administer. I am merely pointing out to the hon. member at the moment that

[Mr. Green.]

he indicates that he is entering on the same line of argumentation as that which, as I have indicated by quotations from *Hansard*, has been propounded by five members already. I think it is my duty to remind him of the rule and to ask him to be careful in the presentation of his argument.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): That rule interferes with the filibuster.

Mr. Speaker: I think I should hear the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra.

Mr. Green: Surely Your Honour is not ruling that the hon. member cannot comment on the fact that the Prime Minister had not participated in the debate this evening or this afternoon. The comments to which Your Honour referred were made about the failure of the Prime Minister to speak yesterday or on Tuesday evening.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Green: Surely, as this debate progresses, an hon. member in the course of his remarks is entitled to comment on the fact that the Prime Minister has not yet taken part in the debate although the motion stands in his name. Surely the hon. member is in order in doing that.

Mr. Studer: What rule stipulates that?

Mr. Green: That is not repetition. It is referring to what is happening at the actual time.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Green: It is quite a different thing from repeating arguments. The hon. member is simply commenting that today, Thursday, June 9, the Prime Minister has not yet seen fit to rise in his place and make any speech on the motion for second reading of this bill. I suggest to Your Honour that such comment should not be ruled as repetition.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): It is certainly paralyzing when you cannot repeat.

Mr. Pouliot: If I may be permitted to do so, Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a few words on the matter raised by some of my hon. colleagues, and in particular by my friend the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra. For many years I have noticed that the members of the opposition are strong in their advocacy of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Mr. Knowles: Don't repeat yourself.

Mr. Pouliot: If freedom of speech is acknowledged, and if human rights and fundamental freedoms are to exist, may I say that the right to remain silent is just as sacred as is the right to speak.