

Ministerial Conduct

record I still believe that no matter what the decision of the house was, the Prime Minister misled the house.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel Lessard (Lake St. John): Mr. Speaker, since that news appeared in the newspapers at a time when the house was concerned with a flag debate which forbade the members to raise that question and since the opposition was unable at any time to put questions to the ministers in that respect, it seems to me that, even if today is supposed to be our last sitting day before the adjournment, it would be appropriate to allow a debate on this issue, so that the members and the ministers involved may make the necessary clarifications, since innuendos appeared in the newspapers.

This matter being of some significance, it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that it would be in order for the Chair to let us discuss it, at this time, with the hope that it will not take us the rest of the day and that we shall proceed with the orders of the day.

Mr. Gilles Grégoire (Lapointe): Mr. Speaker, when I hear in 1964 the present Prime Minister quote what the prime minister of 1959 said, I am convinced that the two old parties are alike: When they are in office, they say one thing, and when they are in the opposition, they say the opposite. When they change sides, they say the same things as their predecessors. This confirms my opinion: both are alike. They wish to hide the truth when they are in power and when some things pop up, and they would like to raise scandals when they are in the opposition.

Since the substance of the matter was dealt with, Mr. Speaker, I must state that I have no doubt about the honesty of the minister concerned, but it seems that one point should be clarified.

I refer to the fact that in all these things which have cropped up of late, whether it be the matter presently under judicial inquiry, or furniture, or Hal Banks, there always seems to be a tie with the electoral coffers of the Liberal party. That, Mr. Speaker, far more than the honesty of the ministers, is what brings questions to my mind.

[*Text*]

Mr. Speaker: Order. The question we are discussing is whether the house should adjourn under standing order 26 to discuss a matter of urgent national importance; not political speeches or things affecting political

parties. Two people have been mentioned. That is the subject before the house.

Mr. Howard: We have got two rules again.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Speaker, on taking the floor a while ago the Prime Minister said that he agreed that the right hon. Leader of the Opposition should have some latitude to speak on the substance of the matter. I should like to have the same latitude, but when I attempt to speak, I am called to order. Why?

I am not accusing anyone, but I wish to point out that every time there is a scandal, the matter of the electoral coffers of the Liberal party crops up. We would like a discussion of this matter and an inquiry into it.

[*Text*]

Mr. Speaker: Order. There is a proper way to make a charge, as the hon. member knows. The question before us is the urgency and the importance of the matter under discussion. We are not concerned with various allegations which have appeared in the papers. We are concerned with the particular question the Chair has to consider at this moment and I would ask the hon. member to restrict himself to the matter under discussion. I am not here to make rules; I am here to apply the rules given to me.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Speaker, I again refer to the importance of the matter. I think discussion is important for the ministers involved because, if they are not guilty, it would give them the opportunity to clear themselves publicly and before the members of the House of Commons. That is why I think it is important.

As far as the urgency of debate is concerned, Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask you when we would have an opportunity to discuss this matter if we cannot do it today, since the session might very well end today.

Mr. Speaker, I think the matter should be open to debate. We will support the motion, because we think we should have more information concerning the public affairs of this government, especially regarding electoral funds, because it affects everybody.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is another point I should like to discuss. Must a specific charge be made by a member of the House of Commons before something can be discussed or referred to the committee on privileges and elections? I do not think so, Mr. Speaker, because since 1962, that is since the day I entered parlia-