

'the Speaker must permit unlimited debate.' The purpose of the rule is obvious. The Speaker desires to be informed, or desires the House to be informed, as to a point of order, and, with his permission, debate may take place upon the point of order. As I understand the Prime Minister, it has been usual to debate such questions with that limitation.

Mr. McKENZIE: The Speaker gave a ruling at that time. The Prime Minister said that it would be proper to have discussion, and immediately thereafter the Speaker gave a ruling that it would be proper to have discussion.

Mr. WHITE: I do not understand that any ruling was given. I think there should be regard for the rules and procedure of this House; and, if the Speaker had given a decision and it was unappealed to this House, even though I might dissent in my own mind from it, I would conform to his decision because it is to the Speaker that we must look to preserve order in the Chamber.

Mr. SPEAKER: I had no intention of giving any ruling at the time, nor did I give any ruling in my judgment. I stated what was the usual custom in the House, as I understood Bourinot to imply, to permit debate.

Mr. WHITE: That is precisely what I understood. I did not understand that you gave any ruling, nor did I understand you to state that unlimited debate was to be permitted. I understood you to say that debate was permissible, but it would be to delete these words and to render them absolutely meaningless to say that unlimited debate should be permitted. I think it would be a very unwise principle to lay down, and I submit that view with very great deference to the consideration of the Speaker and of the House.

I have dealt with this question on general lines and on particular lines, and I have been discussing the question of the propriety of your action, Mr. Speaker, in instructing the Chairman of the committee to put the question without further debate. I have indicated my view. If Mr. Speaker should say in regard to a debate on a point of order: Now, we have had sufficient debate upon that point, I say that under the authority of rule 18, he would be doing nothing wrong. The Speaker is clothed by the authority of this House with the continuing duty of keeping order, and if, upon a particular occasion following a debate on a point of order and during a scene of grave disorder such as existed here, he tells the Chairman of the committee to put the question, thus exercising his judgment as to the best way of putting an end to the disorder, so far as I can see, he does nothing inconsistent with his duties as Speaker

Mr. WHITE (Leeds).

of the House. I submit that as my own opinion, and I argue it on the general ground, as I have repeatedly said, of the paramount necessity of the Speaker keeping order.

On all these grounds I contend that your action, Mr. Speaker, does not call for the reflection of this House because we cannot disguise from ourselves that this is not a purely academic debate but is the result of circumstances that happened on the 15th March. On the contrary, I am of the opinion that we owe you our thanks for the fairness and dignity with which you dealt with a difficult and trying situation and restored this House to a condition of order from a condition of very grave disorder indeed.

Mr. GERMAN: Does the hon. gentleman contend that the Speaker, under rule 18, has the right, having permitted debate on a point of order, to stop that debate while it is relevant to the point of order?

Mr. WHITE: What I am putting forward is my own view. I do not think it has been decided. The Speaker has stated that he did not give a ruling upon that question. My own view is that, if words mean anything, the Speaker may permit a debate on a point of order. It is permissive. He may permit debate on a point of order before rendering his decision. If the Speaker may give permission to members to debate a point of order, there follows from it that, after hearing the debate at such length as he deems proper and adequate, he may terminate it. Otherwise you would have interminable debates upon points of order. If that were not the meaning, how would it read? If that were not the case, would it be worded: 'The Speaker may permit debate of the point of order?' Would it not rather be that: Members shall have the right to debate the question?

Mr. GERMAN: That is permitted to-day, so long as the debate is relevant.

Mr. WHITE: I do not agree with my hon. friend. No precedent has been established, because I understand the Speaker to state that he gave no ruling on the question.

Mr. E. M. MACDONALD (Pictou): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend from Westmorland (Mr. Emmerson), in bringing this matter before the House for discussion, was actuated with the idea that we should have discussed, for the information of the House, and for its future guidance, the question as to whether or not Mr. Speaker has the right to take the Chair when the House is in Committee of the Whole in any case except when the rules expressly provide that he may do so, or in any case other than on the particular occasions when the committee has reported progress. It will