Do we want it in the month of July, or do we want it on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and during private members' hours in the month of June? I think the public will not give us one speck of credit for sitting here all summer to debate something which has been going on for months. I think the public will respect us for having a little more common sense if we support this motion and if we try to make a reasonable amount of headway in the month of June.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond): Mr. Speaker, just a few words about the motion put forward today by the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Sharp). At first, I was very surprised at the conclusion drawn by the Progressive Conservative House leader that he found odd the motion on the extension of hours in today's order paper. Since we had consultations between House leaders and since during these sittings the President of the Privy Council said that if the discussions raised too many points with regard to Bill C-87 and Bill C-68, at this time, we members of the Social Credit Party of Canada do not intend to object to the extension of sitting hours. I think the government wants to be democratic. It wants to extend the hours to complete the consideration of Bill C-84 and also enable all members who would like to speak on that bill and other important one to do so.

If the House wants to adjourn on June 30, we agree. As far as I am concerned, I go once in a while to see my family. I would like to be home sometimes. I do not want to be like the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) who stated that after 300 days the current session had been too long and who in the same breath added that it would have to continue. He should at least know what he wants. Considering that the case at issue has to do with Bill C-87 and Bill C-68, as so well stated by the previous speaker, and that the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Sharp) suggested that the matter was negotiable, I think that we must hasten to vote for the extension of sitting hours to allow the backbenchers who wish to speak on Bill C-84 and other important bills to do so.

[*English*]

Mr. J.-J. Blais (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, at the beginning I thought I might be launching into a long harangue, having had my dander raised by the House leader of the official opposition. But what we have learned from the replies of the House leaders of the Social Credit party and the New Democratic Party is that what is taking place here is, in effect, an open meeting of House leaders. There has been an exchange of views, and people are jockeying for position because we are coming to the end of a very long session. It has been the longest in memory.

An hon. Member: In history.

Mr. Blais: I think it has been the longest in the history of this House. We are dealing with a bill which, with the consent of all parties, has taken a considerable amount of time. As I understand it, we have spent a total of 30 hours debating Bill C-84, and there have been 78 speakers. Everyone was in agreement with that, and I think the contributions have been commendable. I think the whole country has benefited from it. I am not trying to prolong this discussion, but I think there has been a general view that we would like to see this motion, which is not a closure motion but simply a motion to have us work harder as we get close to the end of our session, passed so that that particular bill can be passed.

The motion does not say that this House will adjourn on June 30. There has been an indication by the government as to which legislation it gives priority, and the government has to accept its responsibility in passing a certain package of legislation as best it can within the time-frame and the restrictions of the House and the mood of the House. We do not want to create an antagonistic mood in this House. We want to create a mood which at the end of this long session will permit the passage of legislation which the government deems essential.

There has been an indication from the right that there are some bills which they would like to have some chance to negotiate with regard to their passage, or amendments to some of the provisions. That is fair game. But, as the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre indicated, having spent a great deal of time on Bill C-84, we ought to allow some additional time so that the other pieces of legislation which the government feels are important and necessary can be given a sufficient amount of time on the floor of this House to be intelligently debated. I have no indication as to which ones are to be negotiated. Surely that is something which should be the subject of further negotiations between the House leaders.

The government House leader indicated that he is ready to negotiate certain aspects and certain bills. He is ready to meet again with the House leaders whenever the need is felt. Surely every member in this House is anxious, in view of the heat—especially of last week—to recognize that we have spent a great deal of time in Ottawa, that we have a number of fences to mend in our constituencies and that we have been away from them for an overly long period of time. I am one of those who is very close to his constituency, namely, 240 miles away—, which is not far—and I find that if I can manage three weekends a month in my constituency, that is the maximum. That is not enough if we are to serve our constituents in the proper way.

Those who come from afar are in a worse position than I am. I am looking at the hon. member for Vegreville. Surely, he recognizes that his constituents have not seen him as much as he would like. The same is true of the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands, and all hon. members on this side. It has been a long time. Sometimes our constituents do not recognize that we spend ten months of the year engaged in the legislative process in this House. We are tied to this House; all hon. members opposite recognize that. I agree that if we are going to shore-up our bargaining positions, there is a necessity to try to use such instruments as we have available to us. That is fair game. But I think that on the whole we should recognize that this House has been sitting long enough in this session.

● (1550)

We should also recognize that we ought to be coming up with a new legislative program in the early fall, on the government side, and a rejuvenated attitude on the opposi-