

Business of the House

tion period, and so on. I should therefore like to move a motion as follows:

That the House shall not sit on Friday, June 25, 1976;

That, if at any time before 5:00 p.m. on Friday, June 25, 1976, the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs shall have agreed to report Bill C-84, an act to amend the Criminal Code in relation to the punishment for murder and certain other serious offences, the House shall be deemed to have received the report of the said bill as if it had been sitting; and

That, if the said report shall have been deemed to have been received in accordance with this order, it shall be in order for the House to take up the report stage of the said bill on Monday, June 28, 1976;

Provided that it shall be in order for any member to submit to the Clerk of the House notices of proposed amendments at the report stage of the said bill at any time before 8 p.m. on Friday, June 25, 1976.

Some hon. Members: Oh!

Mr. Speaker: The motion, if it were put forward now, would have to be put forward by unanimous consent. I could, perhaps, hear some brief comments on a point of order if there were some hope the motion might be consented to. Without considering that the motion is being spoken to, the Chair might be ready to accept requests for clarification on a point of order.

Mr. Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, I am disguising a request for clarification by suggesting that I rise on a point of order. As I understand it, what the House leader is asking is that the House give permission to the committee sitting tomorrow, if it so desires, and to the committee sitting on Friday, if it so desires. It is also proposed that the House should not sit tomorrow and, as well, that the 48-hour period for the reporting of the bill be abridged to 24 hours. This would be the practical effect if the House were not sitting on Friday. In other words, notice respecting the report stage of the bill, if the bill were finished in committee on Friday, would mean that the House could go ahead with the report stage of the bill on Monday. To my mind—and I don't care how you slice it—that still is abridging the time required for the report stage to the House from the committee, because the House is not sitting on Friday.

I suggest to the House leader that perhaps there still might be unanimous consent—I do not know, because this is not a matter for party discipline; there are no party whips and there is no party discipline on this matter—on two conditions only. First, that the House leader give an undertaking that in neither case would the third reading stage of Bill C-84, or the report stage of that bill, be proceeded with until after the House resumed in the fall.

An hon. Member: Come off it.

Mr. Lawrence: Otherwise, members of the committee are perfectly entitled to say "No tickee, no laundry", "No House, no committee". In other words, if the House is not sitting, we have the right to object, in the committee, to the committee sitting.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): If the hon. member is denying unanimous consent, I suppose the matter is closed. But I should like to make it clear that we would be happy to agree to this motion. As we understand it, it would provide that if the committee completed its work and made its report on Friday, we would be in exactly the same position on Monday, with the House not

[Mr. Sharp.]

sitting on Friday, as we would with the House sitting on Friday. If we sit on Friday and the committee makes its report, then the report stage debate begins on Monday. If the motion passes and we do not need to sit on Friday, the report stage will be proceeded with on Monday. We do not see it shortening anything; all it does is obviate the necessity of sitting on Friday, which would probably be futile anyway. Therefore, although we voted as individuals yesterday we all voted the same way and I can now say that we would support this motion.

● (1600)

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, one point that bothers me is that in his proposal the President of the Privy Council has totally abrogated the right of individual members to put forward amendments. Under the rules it is open to any hon. member to put down an amendment at report stage 24 hours prior to the taking up of a bill. In his proposal, the President of the Privy Council is saying that members who wish to put down any amendment shall have until 8 p.m. on Friday, June 25, a day when the House is not sitting.

That is all very well for Ottawa and Toronto members, Mr. Speaker, who are interesting in sitting around here to see whether or not the bill comes in so they can put down amendments. I am sure that the table officers would not be prepared to accept, and would not accept any proposed amendments until the bill is reported back. Therefore, hon. members are precluded from putting down amendments. I would suggest that hon. members read the rules and understand them. I was sorry to see a demonstration of what I consider to be the falsity of a free vote on the other side.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): When I hear a concerted catcall on these particular points, it shows that hon. members opposite are advocating government policy. They are taking a party-government stand.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am prepared to hear the hon. member for Edmonton West on a point of order, but I think we must be careful to stay away from substance.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): My point of order is very simple, Mr. Speaker.

An hon. Member: Don't take so long, then.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): If the hon. member even looked at the rule book he would understand my point, which is that there is no possibility of any member of the House being able to put down an amendment, under the proposal put forward by the President of the Privy Council. When the House is not sitting there is no obligation on the table officers to accept amendments. Does the President of the Privy Council expect or insist that any member who wishes to put down an amendment must stay around in Ottawa on Friday, when the House is not sitting, in anticipation of the committee making its report?

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, in the free vote atmosphere that prevails on this side of the House—I say nothing about the other side of the House—there was one point made by the hon. member for Edmonton West