

The question for the Chair to determine is whether the requirements of the relevant Standing Order have been met. Section 3 of Standing Order 75 is clear that a committee report cannot be considered by the House until 48 hours have elapsed following the presentation of the report. How is this requirement to be interpreted?

There is another Standing Order which requires 48 hours notice. The unquestioned practice of the House has been that the 48 hour notice requirement is met when that period extends over a week end or over two sitting days. For example, a notice Tabled at six o'clock on Monday may be dealt with at two o'clock on Wednesday; similarly, a notice filed at six o'clock on Wednesday can be dealt with by the House at 11 o'clock on Friday; a notice filed Friday afternoon can be dealt with on Monday afternoon at two o'clock, in spite of the fact that there have not been two sitting days elapsed between the time of filing of the notice on Friday and the consideration thereof on Monday.

I am sorry that I am using a precedent which dates back to April 14, 1913 but I thought we should go back somewhat to indicate that this has been the practice for many years, now. This precedent confirms my interpretation of the Standing Order—an interpretation which was accepted before the ruling of 1913 and which has been followed since then. The ruling can be found in Beauchesne's third edition at page 827.

If the 48 hour requirement is met in the circumstances I have just outlined it has certainly been met if the report has been filed on a Friday and the report is brought forth for consideration on the following Tuesday, even if there has been an extended recess between the two days. I appreciate the point raised by the honourable Member for Crowfoot that it would have been unfair and contrary to the spirit of the Standing Order to have attempted to proceed to the report stage yesterday since, in practice, there would not have been the proper time in which to file amendment motions. On this basis I suggest the report stage could not have been proceeded with yesterday. In fairness to the honourable Member for Winnipeg North Centre, this is a point which was made very clearly by him.

The point is that the motion was not put yesterday precisely in order that the spirit of the Standing Order could be complied with. I must therefore conclude that the 48 hour requirement specified in section three of Standing Order 75 has been met in the present case. In like fashion, the 24 hour notice required under section five of Standing Order 75 is met if notice of amendments is filed at six o'clock for consideration at any time during the following day's sitting. Indeed, most of the notices filed by virtue of Standing Order 75, section five, during the past and current sessions were received and considered by the House as a result of this interpretation of the Standing Order.

I personally appreciate the fact that this matter was raised. It placed the Chair in the position of having to reflect on the interpretation of the Standing Order. Perhaps the interpretation I have given is not completely to the liking of the honourable Member for Crowfoot or of other honourable Members but it was difficult to reach a contrary decision if, as I feel, the Chair is bound by precedents. If honourable Members feel that the rule as I have interpreted it, is not conducive to fairness, their remedy is to change the rule and it may be, honourable Members might wish to do that in due course. But for the moment, after due consideration and having looked at the matter with all possible