

The other point mentioned by the hon. member for Crowfoot was that some secret manoeuvring took place, which was doing damage to the business of this House—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Olson: —with respect to the motions to adjourn which were moved in the committee. There were at least eight or ten or perhaps more motions to adjourn the committee between 8 p.m. last night and 7.30 a.m. this morning, and there was nothing secret about any one of them.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is a simple one. Is this question now being debated? May we all get into it?

Mr. Speaker: That is precisely the point the Chair made a moment ago, and I have made this point before. Certainly, if the minister were allowed to debate the matter, every other member of the House should be allowed to participate. I am suggesting very simply and very humbly to the minister and to other hon. members that we have established a practice which appears to be working fairly well by allowing a member to state his position. If a member is personally involved, or if his conduct is impugned, I have always thought it would be the desire of other members of the House that the member concerned be given an opportunity to explain his position, but that the matter should rest there, and that the Speaker should then be given an opportunity to look at the matter objectively in order to determine whether there is a prima facie case of privilege. Should the Chair decide that there is, members could debate the matter if they wish to do so.

It seems to me that if I hear argument from the minister I must certainly hear from the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and from any other hon. member who wishes to participate.

Mr. Olson: I was attempting to be helpful by setting before Your Honour for your consideration some opinions which might not correspond with the opinions that were expressed by the hon. member for Crowfoot. However, I can see the difficulty you are having and I will certainly be very brief.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I suggest to the minister and to all hon. members that the practice we have followed has been helpful to all of us in the conduct of our business and I should think that the argument which the minister is making now will not be helpful. I think the House has to trust the Chair to look at all aspects of the matter. The hon. member for Crowfoot is prepared to do this; he has left the matter in the hands of the Speaker. If the minister pursues the procedural argument he is making I see no reason why other members should not be given an opportunity to do so. The hon. member for Crowfoot has submitted the matter to the attention of the Chair and he has indicated what his motion would be if it were ruled by the Chair that there is a prima facie case of privilege. I recognize that this is a serious matter and one which deserves the full attention of the Chair. My thought is

Committee Sitting Hours

that the question should be allowed to rest for the moment until I have consulted with the Clerk of the committee and with the officials of the House and advisers of the Chair. In due course I shall indicate to the hon. member whether I feel this is the kind of question which should be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections. It seems to me this is a much more reasonable way in which to handle the matter.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Olson: Mr. Speaker, I have been under the impression that it is usual when a prima facie case of privilege is being alleged to hear some comment, perhaps very brief comment—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest to the minister that is not the practice and it has not been the practice for some time.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

JUSTICE AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

Fifth report of Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs—Mr. Tolmie.

[*Editor's Note: For text of above report, see today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

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[*Translation*]

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing the House that the Senate has passed Bill S-11, an act to provide for the obtaining of information respecting weather modification activities, to which concurrence of this House is desired.

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[*English*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. MacLean: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I might be allowed on motions to raise a question of order. There has been some discussion, though not as complete as I would have liked, with House Leaders of the other parties and I think there might be agreement to the House making an order to transfer from this supply period to the next supply period the remaining motion of non-confidence that would have been moved on tomorrow's opposition day. If it is agreeable I would ask that this motion be transferred to opposition day in the next supply period.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Yes, Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions and I think we all agree to this request.