

*Business of the House*

quite agree that what is occurring now would not constitute a precedent for a future event. I also want to enter a caveat and to reserve our position to argue that point when it does arise on an entirely different basis.

I have two comments to make and one has to do with notice. I have read the words of the Standing Order which on that point seems to be clear. I am reinforced in my position by the wording that appears, as the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre mentioned, in Standing Order 33, which seemed to me to be absolutely four square. As we know, in the past Standing Order 33 has been interpreted as permitting me to give notice today and to move the motion tomorrow. So on that point I do take that position.

With respect to the first point made by the hon. member for Peace River, it seems to me that my obligation, or at least the obligation of a minister of the Crown, is to state that there has not been an agreement. That obligation is imposed upon a minister by the Standing Order.

It is clear from the discussion that there has not been an agreement. There has not been a majority agreement along the lines that would frustrate the operation of Standing Order 75C. As the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has stated, if a conclusion had been possible under 75B, if all the opposition parties had agreed to a particular position, then he would at least be able to argue the point of order that he will argue at some time in the future. But at the moment it is clear from what has been said that I am perfectly correct in telling the House that an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 75A or 75B. That is clear and it has been supported by the evidence of all opposition House leaders. Therefore I feel that the conditions of Standing Order 75C have been met.

Standing Order 75C does not prescribe any by-laws or guidelines on the way that the informal meetings of House leaders should be conducted. In the absence of that we must take the wording of the Standing Order as it is. All I can say is that the point raised by the hon. member for Peace River was fully covered in our discussions. He knew, as all other hon. members who took part in the discussions knew, the proposal that I had made relating to the committee stage of the bill. That is the fact and it has been supported by another spokesman.

Therefore I simply argue that I have satisfied the obligation of a minister of the Crown to state that an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 75A or 75B. It seems to me it is not for anyone to inquire at this stage how that factual conclusion was reached, but that is the factual conclusion.

• (3:20 p.m.)

**Mr. Speaker:** If there are no other contributions to the interesting debate on the procedural point raised by the hon. member for Peace River I might be prepared to give my opinion at this stage.

Dealing first with the last point, that raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, I should like to reiterate that what he is doing now is entering a caveat which refers to the possible application and reference of Standing Orders 75A and 75B and to the question of whether, in certain circumstances, it would be open to a minister on

[Mr. MacEachen.]

behalf of the Crown to invoke the provisions of Standing Order 75C in cases where there had been agreement between the three opposition parties, or more if there were more in the House. Of course, as had been pointed out by hon. members, this is a theoretical point at this time on which the Chair should not be called upon to rule. I should therefore like to go to the other two points which were made by the hon. member for Peace River.

The hon. member for Peace River suggests that the motion should propose a time allocation to cover all the remaining stages. He suggests, if I understand him well, that it is irregular to have a motion which would refer to only one stage. This, essentially, is the point that he has made. If I am wrong, and the hon. member seems to indicate that I am, I will ask him to correct me in my interpretation of what he said.

**Mr. Baldwin:** Mr. Speaker, I hesitate ever to correct you. The point I was trying to make was that our discussions took place with relation to both remaining parts of the bill, the completion of the committee stage and third reading, and that our discussions with regard to that were bounded by that particular consideration. It is true that a number of days was considered with respect to both parts, but it was a package. I suggest that the minister must now establish *prima facie* that we rejected an agreement with respect to the committee stage alone.

**Mr. Speaker:** I appreciate the point which the hon. member is making. Effectively, what he wants the Chair to do is to go beyond the terms of the Standing Order as it now is. That is exactly the point which was made by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. He suggested that the Chair has to rule on the Standing Order as written and as it is before me for interpretation. Standing Order 75C says that if a minister has given notice of his intention so to do he may "propose a motion for the purpose of allotting a specified number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at that stage." This, I suggest, is what the minister has done at this particular stage. I do not see how it is open to the Chair to go beyond this. Perhaps the Standing Order should be rephrased and presented in another way, but my understanding of it is clear. I have to take the statement made by the minister as expressing the situation which is covered by those words of the Standing Order.

The second point is perhaps a little more knotty, a little more difficult to deal with. It has to do with notice. Obviously, in a general way all motions proposed to the House require 48 hours written notice. I think it is important to note that in this particular case it is not notice of the motion which the minister is required to bring forward at this time, which might put him under the disposition of Standing Order 42(1) dealing with 48 hours of notice of motions. Standing Order 75C requires the minister to give notice of intention to move a motion. I suggest that there is a substantial difference between the two. Standing Order 42(1) specifies the circumstances in which any member of the government or any member of the House proposing a motion must give 48 hours written notice. The type of notice specified in Standing Order 75 is not, I suggest, covered by the terms of Standing Order 42(1). It seems to me that this type of notice is more analogous to the type of notice required under Standing Order 43,