

Supply—Justice

in the committee, struck out. It is quite obvious, too, that the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, who was so anxious to amend and restrict the rules of this house, is attempting to bail out the government in the mistake they have made. They have failed to bring into this house an order such as was presented on June 26 of this year, an order which I was responsible for proposing to the hon. member. I thought that with his experience he would be able to carry on this fall, and consequently I did not go to him yesterday and tell him what he should do. But he cannot now extricate himself from this point.

The sensible thing, in order to save the position of Mr. Speaker, and the Chairman, is for the government house leader to admit his error and say that he will straighten this matter out with the various house leaders tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker: If there are no other contributions to this interesting debate I will attempt to bring some light to a very difficult situation. I must say that I have a great deal of sympathy for all hon. members who have tried to piece together the rules as they are now. This is nobody's fault. I think an honest effort has been made in recent months and years by hon. members to attempt to improve our rules. Whether we have succeeded is a matter of opinion.

I can readily see that it is not easy in a circumstance such as this to find out exactly what our rules say. I followed with interest the opinion and argument of the hon. member for Carleton (Mr. Bell), when he made it originally with the Deputy Speaker in the chair and again when he stated it so clearly later on. He argues, among other things, a point which is of interest, that is, that when a similar situation arose previously, on June 26 last, it was required to be settled by an order to allow that all matters dealing with supply be concluded on that day.

It has been brought to my attention, and I believe this has been mentioned by hon. members in the course of the discussion, that in the original order of June 26 it was impossible to complete the 30 days that were allowed then until all departments had been called and the supply motions completed. It was then specified that one department would still be outstanding even if the fourth order was called. Under the order of June 26 as adopted, this provision was suspended, allowing the house to call all departments even before the four supply motions were called. Therefore, it seems to me we could

[Mr. Churchill.]

complete the 30 days considering supply and even have one supply motion outstanding which perhaps could be called anytime between now and December 6.

While it was necessary on a previous occasion to have an order, this is no longer necessary since the 30 supply days could be called even before the four supply motions have been called.

Having dealt with this point to the best of my ability I have to refer hon. members, as has been done by the Deputy Speaker and by hon. members, to standing order 6(5)(b) which states, beginning at line 3 on page 5:

—when it is provided in any other standing order that the business under consideration at the ordinary time of adjournment shall be disposed of or concluded, the adjournment proceedings in that sitting shall be suspended and that sitting shall not be adjourned except pursuant to a motion to adjourn moved by a minister of the Crown.

There must be a purpose for saying that the adjournment proceedings in that sitting shall be suspended, and that purpose in my mind is not just to allow members to go home at ten o'clock. Surely it must be for the purpose of doing business, and the business that has to be done at that point is the business of supply. I base my view in this regard on standing order 56 which deals with supply proceedings.

Standing order 56 was the subject of a suggested amendment in the report of the procedure committee which was concurred in by the house on April 26, 1967. In this resolution of the house there was a 38 day overall limitation during the session for the business of supply. This included four two-day debates on supply motions, leaving the balance of 30 days for supply. I shall not go into the question about the 36 days rather than 38 days because that has been explained quite clearly by hon. members who have taken part in this debate on the point of order.

If hon. members will now turn to page 50 they will read in the annotations to standing order 56, in the precise wording of the report and concurred in by the house, in paragraph (c):

Subject to the conditions specified below there shall be an overall limitation of thirty-eight days allotted to the business of supply during the session. For the purposes of this order the business of supply shall consist of supply motions; main estimates; interim supply with the exceptions noted below—

As the hon. member for Carleton has said, these are not relevant here. It continues:

—supplementary and additional estimates with the exception noted below; and supply bills based on the foregoing.