

*Extension of Hours*

fence" position, as they have on so many issues. Picket fences have a way of doing painful things to people, as the NDP are finding out on the Crow issue, and I will come back to that. I thought I would just give that little comment to my friend from Winnipeg-Birds Hill.

• (1630)

They should be very careful about the Crow issue but, as I say, I will come back to that. Before I do though, let me begin, in my usual non-partisan fashion, to address this clearly non-partisan issue. We have been plugging away here for almost a year on behalf of the constituents of Burin-St. George's and the other 281 constituencies across Canada who have sent us here to do a job. I believe that all of us as Members of Parliament can take some satisfaction from the amount and the quality of the work that has been done since we came here last fall. But all of us, I believe, are willing to admit that we are anxious to get out of here. Speaking for myself, I am anxious to get out of here. With the provisions that have been made by the parliamentary reform committee of which I am pleased to have been a member, provisions which have been adopted by the House, it is conceivable that we will be out of here on or about June 30.

But being the work horses we are, led by the chief work-horse, the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Pinard), we want to put in some extra effort before we go. We want to find a little extra time, another five hours a day when we would normally be out attending dinner parties in the case of some Members or committee meetings in the case of others. We want to work during that period from six o'clock to 11 o'clock each night. That is what we are asking Parliament to allow us to do. We are asking Parliament to allow us to do some more good work on behalf of the Canadian people.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, if there is anything particularly sinister or suspicious about that kind of request. This proposal should not have had to come before the House. We should not be spending two hours discussing it, although the rules do provide for that. There is nothing illegitimate about what we are doing, but there is something a bit uncomely and a bit unnecessary about it because we should have made a gentleman's agreement to proceed along the lines provided for in this particular motion. But we do not have that agreement and we are here begging the House to allow us to do even more work between now and the end of June. That is the only intent of the motion put under new Standing Order 9 by my friend, the President of the Privy Council.

I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that you listened with absolutely unbridled interest to the Hon. Member for Simcoe North (Mr. Lewis) who assured the House that he and his colleagues wanted to facilitate the consideration of legislation. Having said that, in the very next sentence he came up with an amendment that thankfully was not accepted by the Chair, but nevertheless he proposed an amendment that would have cluttered up and made clumsy the very work that we are trying to achieve here. In the spirit of Standing Order 9, we want to make available to the House some additional time in which to dispose of its business. That is the spirit of that provision of the Standing Orders, and yet the hon. gentleman from Simcoe

North brought in an amendment which would order very inflexibly the business we could deal with. That amendment has gone the way it should have gone because it was certainly a peevish, petty, shoddy and mischievous bit of work that would have had the effect of making the accomplishment of the work of the House pretty inflexible and unwieldy.

After all, Mr. Speaker, there are days when the Minister who is sponsoring a particular Bill is not here because he is out in the country performing his other responsibilities as Minister. Alternately, the Opposition spokesperson on a particular matter, say the Opposition spokesperson for fisheries or farm matters, may not be able to be present on the day when we would want to call that particular Bill if the order had been dictated by amendment. In courtesy to him or her, would it not be fair to try to accommodate the schedule of the House to his or particular schedule, given that he or she has been designated by the Party to speak on behalf of the Party on those matters?

Clearly the intent of Standing Order 9 under which this motion has been put is to permit the House to find additional time in which to do its business. Having said that, it is a well established practice and a long standing tradition that it is the Government that calls the order of business. The spirit of the recommendation brought forward by the parliamentary reform committee was to give the Government some flexibility in meeting the June 30 deadline. Last year we were here until some time in August, I believe, and as a group we told ourselves that that served nobody's purpose, not our own purpose nor the purpose of our constituents. It was certainly not fair to our families who had made schedules for the summer, the only time when the children of many Members of Parliament have time off from their regular school classes. So last fall we told ourselves that the time had come to regularize the schedule of the House of Commons. The committee on parliamentary reform recommended that we ought to aim for shutting this place down at the end of June. That is still our aim and it is now embodied in Standing Orders.

To help the Government and the House meet that deadline, we have before us a motion which would give us just a little more flexibility to facilitate the completion of some of the business before the House. It is not a particularly complicated motion. The motion only asks that we all agree to spend a little extra time here.

The Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans) seeks to make the motion complicated. He seeks to append to it caveats and conditions and prerequisites. In effect, he says, "We will agree to the extra time on the condition that you do not do anything that we do not like." That is basically what he said. "We will agree to the extra time, provided you dance to our tune, provided you do it our way." Well, I say to him that in February of 1980, the people of Canada addressed that problem. At that time, the people of Canada were asked in a general election whether the NDP or the Tories or the Liberals ought to form the Government and be the team that would call