

*Business of the House*

of the house can get all the time they feel they need to discuss the business before us.

We have been informed by the Prime Minister that this session will come to an end at two o'clock on Friday morning, December 28. That is the effect of his closure announcement. It is up to us as to how many hours between now and then we are to debate the measures before us. If my motion does not carry, or if the amendment of the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mrs. Fairclough) carries, we limit ourselves to a few hours today, to the hours laid down for tomorrow and to the time on Thursday, December 27, from eleven a.m. to two a.m. the following morning. But my motion would add to that period of time whatever number of hours we want to take between now and 10.59 tomorrow morning.

**Mr. Drew:** Mr. Speaker, I greatly regret—

**Mr. Warren:** Scrooge.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Drew:** Mr. Speaker, may I suggest that the hon. member who has just interrupted might, with more profit to the house and to himself, join in the Christmas carols that were being sung a short time ago outside of this chamber. We are trying to discuss a serious subject, and I regard it as an extremely serious subject indeed. I do regret very much that the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre should find himself in the position of presenting arguments such as he has made. Whether I agree with his political views or whether I agree with the arguments he sometimes puts forward, I think he has had evidence of the fact that I have respected his efforts to enlighten this house in regard to matters affecting rules of procedure. I regret very much to find him employing such a specious argument as that which he has now used. I would have thought the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, if he was convinced that we were being deprived of our rights, would rise and say: We join you in this fight to preserve the rights of parliament. That I think would be in keeping with the stand he has taken here in the past.

**Mr. Knowles:** Once the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent), or any minister of the government, has announced closure under standing order 39, I think it is, is there anything parliament can do about it?

**Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood):** That is their responsibility.

**Mr. Knowles:** He has announced that, though I did not know the Prime Minister was going to make that announcement when I made my motion this morning. I submit the fact that he has announced it puts a

different complexion upon my motion. As a matter of fact my motion is a godsend to the Tories if they only realized it.

**Mr. Drew:** Mr. Speaker, really we are getting the most convincing evidence as to why this amendment should be adopted. It is perfectly obvious that the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre is already so tired that he cannot think now let alone later tonight. I say that of an hon. member who ordinarily is so clear.

**Mr. Knowles:** I shall be ready to speak at four o'clock tomorrow morning.

**Mr. Drew:** When he says this has already been done I would point out that the Prime Minister has not yet put any motion in regard to closure. The Prime Minister has said: Unless you submit, we are going to do it. Let me read his words again. I hope these words will not only be borne in mind by hon. members of this house but that there will be an opportunity for the people of Canada to know exactly what happened here today. I recall this one sentence, Mr. Speaker. I am quoting the Prime Minister now:

Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to debate this motion, but I do intend when the house is in session tomorrow, if the business has not been concluded, to give notice under the closure rule that it will be applied on Thursday, December 27.

Oh, there was a time when the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre would have been the very one to rise and tell the Prime Minister: No matter whether you agree with what we are doing or not, do not ask us to submit to a threat of that kind. Let us rather preserve the rights of parliament and the rights of hon. members to proceed with their debate in the ordinary way.

**Mr. Gardiner:** May I ask the leader of the opposition to read the statement that was made with regard to the same matter by the hon. member for Eglinton (Mr. Fleming)?

**Mr. Knowles:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Gardiner:** Just before the Prime Minister answered him.

**Mr. Knowles:** He dared him to do it.

**Mr. Drew:** I am reading the quotation from the Prime Minister. The Minister of Agriculture is only too well aware that, though we might like our advice to be taken, we are not yet in the position where our statements as to what should be done are observed with regularity by the Liberal members in this house—and I am using the capital "L" in this case.

**Mr. Gardiner:** May I just say to the leader of the opposition that my memory of what happened is that the hon. member for Eglinton challenged the Prime Minister to move