

Business of the House

Mr. Deans: Madam Speaker, a fascinating process indeed; so much for the tyranny of the minority. However, let me say two things about this. First of all, I think the arguments of the Opposition House Leader are sound. More important, on behalf of my colleagues, we would be prepared to consider the matters the Members have put on the floor, at least to this point, and for which they are seeking unanimous consent. However, in order that we do not take up all day on it, which of course is my normal, reasonable approach to everything, I would like to suggest that if the Government would agree not to proceed at this point in time with its motion for closure or time allocation, as it chooses to call it—

Mr. Nielsen: We want our ideas to be heard.

Mr. Deans: The Hon. Member for Yukon says that he wants his ideas to be heard.

Mr. Nielsen: I said, "Our ideas".

Mr. Deans: I am sorry, he wants "our ideas" to be heard.

An Hon. Member: Their ideas.

Mr. Deans: What he is saying is that in fact he wants to get the views of his Members on the record. If the Government would like to adjourn for the rest of the day, I would be prepared, on behalf of my learned colleagues, to agree to have our Members sit down with whoever is appropriate on the Government side—perhaps the Minister of Transport, if he knows anything about the Bill—and the appropriate Members from the Conservative Party, to look at the various amendments, attempt to achieve a consensus and come back on another day to discuss how the matter could then be proceeded with.

It would seem to me, looking at the question before us, that the Hon. Member for Yukon is correct that a Member ought to be able to seek unanimous consent for a motion. It would also seem to me that there are other important matters of which we could be determining the outcome this afternoon, tomorrow or next week, such questions as unemployment and how the Government proposes to deal with it. If the Government House Leader or his surrogate would be prepared to agree either to call another order in order that meetings could be held or to adjourn until six o'clock, coming back tomorrow to go on with tomorrow's normal business, we could sit and discuss this matter and in fact come to some satisfactory, rational and sensible conclusion.

Mr. Evans: Tomorrow is an Opposition day.

Madam Speaker: In reply to those interventions, I want to remind the House of a few things. I do not think I ever said that unanimous consent was not allowed at this time. I just said that Hon. Members had heard the President of the Privy Council say that he would not give unanimous consent to any of the requests to waive notice for certain of their amendments. I never said that to seek unanimous consent was out of order. Of course it is not out of order. The Chair is always in

the hands of the House if, by unanimous consent, it wants to set aside certain rules. Of course the Chair will do that.

I am afraid the Hon. Member for Yukon in his usual way of arguing was quoting me at times like these, when the House is a bit nervous and is trying to reach some kind of agreement and when the Chair is lenient with the rules. These periods should not be invoked as precedents. When the Chair decides to go along with the mood of the House and to allow the House to discuss a certain number of things, even if some of the rules are being stretched a bit, that is normal procedure and practice in our House. What the Chair has to do once an occurrence like that has taken place is quickly to return the House to the very strict observance of the rules. I think the House has generally accepted that. It is the duty of the Chair once that period is over to remind the House that the rules are there and that they will be adhered to as strictly as possible.

In the course of his argumentation, I think the Hon. Member for Yukon has persuaded me of one thing. I had told the House that obviously the Hon. President of the Privy Council would not give his consent to any of the requests that were being made by the Opposition. The Hon. Member for Yukon suggested that the Chair should ask for consent *seriatim* on all the suggestions that were made by the House. I think I am convinced that unanimous consent or refusal of unanimous consent cannot be a sweeping thing because obviously there might be one or two that could be agreed to—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Madam Speaker: —and, therefore, it is the duty of the Chair to put every possible proposal before the House so that the House can agree to it or refuse it according to its own will.

This being said, I will allow Hon. Members to seek consent for the different proposals they have to make to the House.

Mr. Axworthy: Madam Speaker, taking into account the ruling you have just made based upon the rules and precedents of the House, I think it is important, if we are to take at face value the protestations of the House Leader and of other Members of the Official Opposition that their entire purpose is simply to facilitate the operation of the House, to suggest that they are going about it the wrong way. What I have said quite clearly is that if they are serious in trying to present amendments over and above the some 70 or 80 amendments that are already on the Order Paper, I would be quite prepared, once we have decided on the time allocation, in the next two days to sit with them and work out those amendments which would be appropriate.

Mr. Mazankowski: You are not serious.

Mr. Axworthy: The Hon. Member for Vegreville is becoming a little agitated again.

Mr. Mazankowski: Because you are not serious.

Mr. Axworthy: I am perfectly serious, and we have proven it because we have already accepted amendments from the Opposition. It is the Hon. Members opposite whose sincerity