

Business of the House

sections as possible. There are 330 in all, and there are still roughly 220 to be passed. So, it is not easy.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: Order. When the hon. member had the floor a few days ago he pointed out that it was perhaps unfair to him—order, please. I am just drawing attention to the fact that the hon. member for Bellechasse took exception some time ago to the fact that when he or another member of his party took the opportunity to raise points of order or make statements on motions they did not receive the same attention as did other members. The reason suggested was that they were expressing themselves in French. I could not agree with that, but this is another occasion upon which it is extremely difficult to hear what the hon. member is saying.

[*Translation*]

I believe the hon. member should enjoy the same privilege as his other colleagues, that of being heard in the House.

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your generosity and sense of justice for all members, even those who express themselves in French. I am sure all hon. members will wish to co-operate. I once brought up that point and realized that the majority of members agreed. I would not like to get back to the matter every day. I thank you for your intervention and for setting the record straight.

In concluding, if the procedure proposed today is approved, I believe a precedent will be created. If, some day, Canada should live under a government with more pronounced dictatorial ideas, then, our parliamentary system might be ruined and we would turn towards the establishment of a parliament which would not discharge its duties as efficiently and as democratically as today.

In my opinion, the motion which has just been introduced should be studied carefully. The House leaders of the different parties should study it in order to reach an understanding, in order that the whole country—and even the Commonwealth nations—should not be left with the impression that the Canadian Parliament is becoming more and more difficult, but rather that it is a Parliament where the members are really responsible, where even those in the opposition are ready to co-operate. To co-operate does not mean that all the bills introduced by the government should be rushed through. To co-operate means to study them wisely and intelligently, to make suggestions, to propose amendments such as the rules permit.

I do not think that there was obstruction, and I would not like to see Standing Order 75C applied at the present time.

• (3:10 p.m.)

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: Is the hon. member for Peace River rising to speak to the same point of order? The hon. member will appreciate that he has already spoken but it may be he would like to address himself to the additional point of order raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. I see at the same time that the hon. member for

York East wishes to participate in the procedural debate and perhaps he should be recognized first.

Mr. Steven Otto (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, I rise only to deal with the argument of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. I ask your instruction since he indicated that he wanted you to rule on the interpretation of the word “or” in Standing Order 75C. He wanted to enter a caveat depending on how Your Honour interpreted the meaning of that Standing Order. He interpreted it to mean where an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 75A “and” 75B. If Your Honour is going to make a ruling on that point, then I think we should have an opportunity to argue it. I suggest with all respect that the only issue at stake now is Standing Order 75A. There has been no unanimous agreement. I submit that is the only point you should cover in your ruling.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I might lay to rest or ease the hon. member's difficulty if I tell him that my understanding of the point raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre was that it was more theoretical. He indicated he was only entering a caveat. I think any hon. member who has looked at this rule over a period of months would appreciate that there is a difficulty here. Fortunately for the Chair that decision does not have to be made at this time. That is my understanding of the point raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, under the provisions of Standing Order 37 I wonder whether I might confirm what Your Honour has just said. I was not asking what the hon. member for York East said I was asking in any case. But neither was I asking for a ruling from Your Honour on the crucial point in this rule at this time; I was simply entering a caveat so that on another occasion what has happened today will not be a precedent that could be used against us.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Chairman, on the same basis may I say I am not going to deal with the matter raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre save as it is related to what I said on my first point. What I was saying, if I may put in one sentence—and I think it is substantiated indirectly by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre—was that the minister cannot stand today and say that an agreement was not reached under 75A or 75B in respect of the stage which we are now at, the committee stage, because never were we asked with respect to the committee stage alone to agree to this number of days. We dealt with the matter as a package—five days and three days.

Mr. Speaker: I do not want to interrupt this interesting debate and if hon. members want to make further contributions I will listen to them. It might be easier for the Chair to listen to argument on this point than to go to the question period. If there are no other contributions I am prepared to make a ruling.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, may I begin by agreeing with the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre that the point of order presently before the House does not raise the point against which he has now issued his caveat. I