

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, I personally do not see any reason why everybody should relieve you of the responsibility of making that decision.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. If we are going to decide this by way of an order at the present time, obviously it will take the consent of the House to make an order. Any hon. member who does not want to consent to it is, of course, in the position to do so and I will have to come back, I suppose, and make a decision. Before I know that this resolution can be tried, I do not know how I can continue to hear argument on the merits of this position we were in a moment ago. There has been a suggestion now by the leaders of all the parties of the House—

[*Translation*]

Judging from the last intervention of the hon. member for Bellechasse, I think he agrees to settle the problem in the proposed manner. The hon. member for Bellechasse.

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, thank you for inviting me to finish my remarks. What I wanted to convey a moment ago was that in my opinion the report stage is not over as long as the question has not been put, even if it is deferred. That is how I see things. If the House agrees that the minister should withdraw his motion, I would be in full agreement because it would prevent us from wasting two hours which we could spend on the study of the bill. We will have the same amount of time for debate and I think we will have made a smart move and that in future we will think twice before deferring the vote, particularly on such a sensitive question. Mr. Speaker, a moment ago, I was hoping that the Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) would indicate in his remarks that in his mind the motion, as regards the time allotted to report stage or third reading, also includes the time needed to hold the vote. Otherwise it should be clearly stated that it concerns only the time allotted for debate and that there will be additional time for voting. I would like this matter to be clearly defined so that we would at last know exactly where we stand on this matter. However, if the House wishes to continue in the direction that has been proposed, I will not object and neither will my party.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: I see two other members rising in their places, but I have a proposal before me which requires the unanimous consent of the House. I have a proposal to withdraw a motion from consideration and to introduce another order of the House.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Peters: Mr. Speaker, I see no reason why there should be unanimous consent to allow the minister to withdraw this motion. He is a member of the government. He is a cabinet minister and he introduced it. He talked to his House leader and he knew that this arrangement could have been made before. He just wanted to make a big show in Toronto showing how brave he is with a closure motion. He is asking a lot by

Time Allocation

asking the House to allow him to withdraw after putting the motion forward. In order to save you the difficulty, Mr. Speaker—because it will be a difficult ruling no matter which way you go—I will agree to unanimous consent being given. However, I think this is an abuse of the minister's powers.

Mr. Allan Lawrence (Northumberland-Durham): I will be very brief, Mr. Speaker. I just want to make a couple of points. Initially, and I am sure the Chair will agree, we would not be in this procedural wrangle now if there had not been a call for the actual votes to be taken.

The second point is whether or not those votes would have been deferred. Because the question of intent and attitude has already entered into some of the arguments before you, I would like to point out that it was the minister's action which called for recorded votes over the objection of members of the opposition. That is the first point.

On the question whether the votes should be deferred or not, again it was the attitude and the expressed wish of the minister that those votes be deferred. In effect, the minister is the author of his own predicament. I hope he will learn his lesson.

There is a very brief argument I want to make to Your Honour, because if you do not make a ruling now, you will have to make it at some time in the future. This hassle or determination of the meaning of this particular rule is going to come before you again if it is not decided by you now. If the report stage has not been concluded, which is the argument of the Deputy Prime Minister, how did the House move on to Bill C-38? We could not have proceeded to move on to Bill C-38. There was no adjournment motion. Bill C-38 was called by the Chair because obviously the debate on the report stage was over. There is no other way.

Mr. Speaker: We obviously can chase this argument around all afternoon. The point in the final analysis comes to this. I can wrestle with a very difficult procedural decision, but the longer the House reflects on it the more it will realize that in the procedural decision there may be no winners, that in the situation we are in I can come down on one side or the other of a particular finding.

The fact is that the finding that is essential to victory on one side may in fact be self-defeating on another argument, and similarly on the other side. Accordingly, I happen to celebrate the fact that the House has drawn itself to this position. I hope all hon. members join me in that position.

That being the case, there has been an application for consent upon the condition that an order be made dealing with the termination of third reading by tomorrow at six o'clock, and that the present motion standing in the name of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, seconded by the Deputy Prime Minister, be now withdrawn.

Mr. MacEachen: On that point, Mr. Speaker, I am not being quarrelsome but I just wonder if it is necessary to ask for withdrawal. I wonder whether the motion has been put. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre raised his point of order before the motion had been put, and if it had been put