

motion moved before government orders was to proceed until the daily hour of adjournment was reached, or until a superceding motion interrupted the debate. In all the motions which have been debated after proceedings were begun before orders of the day, we have never interpreted private members' hour on the dinner adjournment, fixed at a set time as is the question period, to mean an interruption in the procedural sense. They are a temporary suspension of proceedings properly before the House.

How can there now be a contention that this rule does not have the meaning it was intended to have by its authors, and the meaning it has had for twelve years? Are concurrence debates now to stop at five o'clock or the dinner hour? Will that be the limit on any debate which may arise on a question of privilege? Are government adjournment motions to be a routine proceeding before dinner and a government order after? Will the government be able to arrange for Black Rod to come tapping at the door at four o'clock, thus interrupting debate on a motion properly before the House? Are we to decide that an interruption at 2.15 p.m. is somehow more permanent than an interruption at five o'clock? Any change in the interpretation of Standing Order 45(2) would have profound effects on our procedure, all to the disadvantage of the opposition parties, pro tem.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that the counter argument is what appears to be the plain language of the rule to which you alluded in your opening discourse. I have shown that the rule was never intended to be interpreted in the way now suggested. I must point out that not all standing orders can be applied without reference to practice. If we are to take rules literally, then we are in for interesting times. The next time the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) leaves to deliver an address such as the one on February 22, he will need the permission of the House under the terms of Standing Order 5; according to Standing Order 11, I am sorry to say we will never again see an increase in members' salaries or benefits, because we would all be forbidden to vote on the matter. I particularly look forward to the enforcement of Standing Order 28, when all members wishing to address the House must rise "uncovered". I assume the Chair will not be sympathetic to arguments that this was meant to refer to hats, because the rule does not mention hats.

Mr. Speaker, a motion which is properly before the House before orders of the day has always been debatable until the House adjourns or a superceding motion is moved. If the House wishes otherwise then it must carry further the revisions made in 1965 and 1969. We cannot ignore precedent and practice simply because a potentially awkward situation is created for the House.

● (1522)

That constitutes my formal submission to you with respect to the operation of the standing order. I think it is possible there may be other people who wish to participate in the course of the debate, and I hope it will be possible for you to take this matter under serious consideration and entertain

representations from other members of the House in order that we may have a most important point clarified in the interests of having an understanding of the rules and be able to expedite the business of the House, because that is what we all seek to obtain.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar will recognize at once that I have had this matter under consideration for quite some time. He asked me to take it under serious consideration. There have been three previous occasions on which I have been faced with the same difficulty. However, the hon. member in his contribution does not address the central point. The central point is whether he or other hon. members would prefer that we go past the hour designated for the commencement of question period. That is the difficulty. It is not difficult to carry on the debate. But once we go by the hour of 2.15 the question then becomes: do we have any authority to take question period later on? Yesterday and the day before when there were a number of members to be introduced, I indicated to the House that obviously we consider it a matter of priority to introduce new members to the House. I presume that members are agreed that we should guard the time for the question period in order to do that, and in the circumstances of course the House agreed.

Supposing we were in a situation in which the House did not agree? Does the Chair have the authority to return at four o'clock or five o'clock, or eight o'clock in the day, to a question period? It seems to me that the House does not have that authority unless the House gives the Chair the authority to do that. It appears to me this means a second question requiring the consent of the House. The first question would be whether the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie (Mr. Symes) today had the consent of the House to present a motion for discussion. That motion having been presented, when 2.15 arrived and the matter was under discussion, the House would either have to give its consent that the debate could go on for some time, with the question period to be taken later in the day at the conclusion of the debate, or that once we had gone past 2.15 the question period could not be called for that day. That is the real collision between the two rules, and that is the one to which I want all hon. members to address themselves.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Mr. Speaker, I am sure you will receive considerable representation.

As I understand it, at 2.15 the debate can be interrupted. But it seems to me then, and this is my own idea of the interpretation of the rule, that if that is the strict understanding of the rule, you would revert back and have a continuation of debate following that interruption, the same way as I referred in the course of my presentation to the interruption during dinner hour or private members' hour. In other words, it is an interruption in the same way in which those two items are interruptions in the proceedings. But they do not forestall the return or continuation of the debate properly initiated prior to 2.15 when you have received the unanimous consent to continue with, or to present to the House, the motion brought by any private member. In my opinion it is the logical explana-