

Business of the House

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Medicine Hat.

Mr. Churchill: Mr. Speaker, I just consented to revert to motions, as asked by the hon. member for Fort William, for one purpose and one purpose only. To deal with the reports that you now mention would require again reverting to motions, to which I am not prepared to give consent.

Mr. Knowles: On the point that the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre has raised, could we cast our minds back to what happened at eleven o'clock this morning? As I understood you, Mr. Speaker, you stated from the chair that these two reports were stood from then until later this day. If that is the case is it necessary to revert to motions in order to deal with them? I do not believe it is.

Mr. Olson: These two motions for concurrence in the 18th and 19th reports were stood until later this day at eleven o'clock this morning. I meticulously looked into this matter to see that they were not stood until the next sitting of the house. Therefore I am sure that consent to stand the motions at eleven o'clock would not have been given if there was to be a requirement that they would stand over until another sitting, or require unanimous consent to revert to motions. I respectfully submit to Your Honour that we do not require unanimous consent at this time to take up these motions because there has already been a unanimous order given by the house that the motions would come up later this day.

Mr. Churchill: If hon. members are going to get very technical about it, I would not mind calling it ten o'clock.

Mr. Aiken: Mr. Speaker, I think when the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre consented to reverting to motions for one specific purpose he did so to permit the tabling of a report, but I think that has nothing to do with the business which was adjourned from this morning, and I want to urge on the house that we should proceed with these two motions.

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, when a matter is referred to be dealt with later this day, does that mean the parliamentary day or the calendar day? If it is the calendar day then the day has long since expired, and you would have no right to deal with these motions.

Mr. Speaker: I do hope I will not interfere with the rights and privileges of hon. members, but it is my duty to point out that I made a notation that these two motions would

be called later this day. Therefore one hon. member is certainly right in saying so.

I would like to point out that very considerable inter-party work has gone into these two reports. In particular the 18th report dealing with committees is one which we think is a great step forward in committee work, and I believe was agreed to by all the members on the committee.

Of course I am in the hands of the house and must take the decision of the house, but I do think it would be a great loss and we will not be making a forward step if we do not at least consider whether we should concur in these two reports tonight. I would ask the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre if he could not shed that glow of warm feeling that we frequently feel, and assist the Chair and the house in taking what the committee at any rate feels is a real step forward in the modernization of procedures in the house, and which could prove of very material value to hon. members in the next session.

Mr. Churchill: I am not objecting to this on narrow grounds. I take a great interest in the rules, but I do object to having a committee of any size attempting to force something through the house without adequate discussion. Under the circumstances I would be prepared to discuss these motions for two or three hours.

I regret very much that the committee failed to effect a compromise with those who did not agree with their suggestions, and this is the situation they have got themselves into now. Had they been prepared to compromise, then perhaps we might have made some progress, but when people take an attitude like that—and I do not care how long they worked or who the committee is—they cannot expect to force their will on other members of the house who have just as much right to deal with rules as people on these committees. I say this from my experience in the past, having served for four years on the committee on rules. That is the reason for my stand on this occasion. The changes we desire can be made in the next session. They can be brought about by agreement and by compromise. But no attempt should be made to introduce them at ten minutes to two on April 3.

Mr. Pickersgill: Might I make a suggestion which would, possibly, be a compromise? As the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill) has just indicated, it is evidently the desire of a number of members to express views on these reports. Certainly