

*Committees of the House***NATIONAL HEALTH AND WELFARE****AUTHORIZATION TO TRAVEL FOR STANDING COMMITTEE**

Mr. Doug Lewis (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): I have a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Let me say, just before we get back to Orders of the Day, that there have been discussions among the Parties and I wish to put a motion with respect to travel in order that the committee involved may make the appropriate arrangements. I move:

That the Standing Committee on National Health and Welfare be authorized to adjourn from place to place within Canada, specifically:

- 1) Toronto, Ontario, May 20 to 22, 1987, inclusive;
- 2) Victoria, Vancouver, Alkali Lake and Meares Island, British Columbia, May 31 to June 3, 1987, inclusive; and
- 3) Edmonton, Alberta, June 3 to June 4, 1987, inclusive;

to hold public hearings concerning the committee's ongoing study on alcohol and drug abuse and that the necessary staff do accompany the committee.

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Motion agreed to.

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POINT OF ORDER**ADOPTION OF MOTION PRIOR TO END OF DEBATE—RULING BY MR. SPEAKER**

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey—White Rock—North Delta): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whether my point is a point of order or question of privilege but I did want to reflect on the ruling made at the lunch break. I do it with some trepidation because I hold you in very high regard.

I think the statement, which obviously is not available to me in the "blues", had something to do with assuming that there was unanimous consent or there is deemed to be unanimous consent in the House regarding the motion before the House. I would not argue at all that at the time of debate there was unanimous consent. I think there was that spirit of oneness among the Members and I am not speaking to the substance of the motion at all. There may well be unanimous consent throughout the day regarding the motion. However, I wonder if, by assuming at one o'clock that there is unanimous consent when there are still several hours of debate left, and since we do not even know who is going to be speaking to the motion, it would not be considered premature to consider that there is unanimous consent or there is deemed to be unanimous consent to the motion before the debate is over. Are we not proscribing the rights of other Members who have yet to speak

on the motion if, before the debate is finished, there is deemed to be unanimous consent?

While I do not want to disagree with you, I do draw to your attention the fact that an early decision regarding unanimous consent has the potential of restricting debate and restricting the rights of Members in the debate. Therefore, I would like to have a clarification of the remarks you made since, as I said, I do not have the "blues" at my disposal.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps I can assist the Hon. Member who has raised a legitimate point. What happened just before one o'clock was that a suggestion was made by the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie) that in view of the way the debate was going there might be some disposition in the House to take the position then that, at the end of the day, it would be deemed that this motion receive the unanimous support of the House. The point that the Hon. Member is making is that this is probably not the usual practice. It may be that some caution should be exercised when such a suggestion is made, especially if it is made relatively early in the debate on a motion. I think that is the sense of the Hon. Member's observations, and of course there always is the difficulty that if a motion like this should be accepted by the House early in debate, some Hon. Member who was busy attending to some other parliamentary duty might have felt that if he or she had been in the Chamber the matter might have gone a little differently.

However, the position the Chair before one o'clock was simply this. A suggestion was made by an Hon. Member. The Minister of the Crown concerned was in the Chamber. Both the Minister and the Hon. Member for Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe (Mr. Tobin), who seemed to be quite clearly speaking for the Official Opposition, indicated support for the suggestion of the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Birds Hill. At that point, because this House is the master of its own proceedings and in view of the fact that the Chair could not see that there was anything out of order about the procedure proposed, the Chair listened carefully and I think properly made it clear what was being proposed, and then clearly put the question to the House. Therefore I think procedurally what took place is proper.

However, the Hon. Member raises a question which perhaps we could all keep in mind, that is, that while this was unusual and it may well be resorted to again, there is of course the caveats which the Hon. Member has pointed out. I am sure all Hon. Members will benefit from the comments made. However, I certainly have to find that what was done was done within the procedural rules and according to the will of the House, as the Hon. Member pointed out. I thank the Hon. Member for his observations.