

*Business of the House*

With their huge majority members on the government side can have a two-hour nap at times and still have a fair number of members in the house, enough to carry on if we were to sit after twelve o'clock through to 10.30 in the morning. They are in a much better position than we are.

**An hon. Member:** Speak to the amendment.

**Mr. Charlton:** I am speaking to the amendment.

**Mr. Speaker:** I am not so sure.

**Mr. Charlton:** I appreciate your uncertainty because you probably cannot hear what I am saying.

**Mr. Sinnott:** We cannot understand what you are saying.

**Mr. Charlton:** Some hon. members would not understand it in any case. I still say that we would be in better shape to carry on the business of the house tomorrow if we were to close down at twelve o'clock tonight rather than carry on all night.

**Mr. Winters:** This is a demonstration of it.

**Mr. Charlton:** I can stand it if you can. If we do have to sit all night, I should like to see the same proportion of government members here as there is now. I intend to vote for the amendment.

**Some hon. Members:** Question.

**Mr. G. C. Nowlan (Annapolis-Kings):** This is hardly the time for the question. There was an opportunity for the question to be put on this matter early in the afternoon.

**An hon. Member:** When?

**Mr. Nowlan:** At 2.30 in the afternoon when the hon. member for Eglinton spoke. That is when there was an opportunity to settle the matter. The opportunity has been present since that time, and now I presume it is hoped the opposition may withdraw the amendment or that something else may happen. Possibly when it comes close to ten o'clock this amendment will be accepted by the house. I do not know, but perhaps then we would sit until twelve o'clock. The unfortunate thing about all this is that this time could have been saved, and the matter could have been dealt with more expeditiously earlier in the afternoon. When this motion appeared so suddenly this morning from the blue no one knew—

**Mr. Knowles:** I am not blue.

**Mr. Adamson:** From the red.

**Mr. Nowlan:** My hon. friend I am sure would object if I said "red", but it appeared out of the blue—

**Mr. Knowles:** My hon. friend's face is red.

**Mr. Nowlan:** I am not referring to political complexions. It is possible that there was some misunderstanding as to what was involved this morning and I think, Mr. Speaker, that suggests that possibly some consideration should be given to these rules which, as Your Honour properly ruled this morning, permit such motions without notice. Nevertheless, some consideration should be given in the future to making motions affecting hours of sitting the subject of notice, so members would know what they had to face when they came into the house. If we had known this morning all the circumstances involved in the motion, perhaps we would not have had this debate today.

**An hon. Member:** You have made a mistake.

**Mr. Nowlan:** No, there is no mistake whatever. I feel that this day will be recognized in parliamentary annals as a time when the opposition stood and insisted upon having certain rights preserved for opposition parties. In this case it is the official opposition, but it might just as easily be any of the opposition groups; and before too long it will be the present government that is sitting on this side of the house.

After all, Mr. Speaker, an extension of two hours is reasonable. I must say I think it is a tribute to members on all sides of the house that, considering the many hours of debate which have preceded this amendment, the pressure of the holiday season and so on, bad tempers have been restrained as well as they have. You, sir, have presided over this chamber for so many hours during what I know has been a long and boring debate. No matter how long or how boring it may be in detail it is important in substance, because we are preserving something here by this action which I think Speakers in the future, who occupy the chair which you now occupy, will recognize as a tribute to our parliamentary system in so far as the establishment of the rights of minorities is concerned, of whatever political complexion they may be.

You have pointed out, sir, that it is very difficult to debate the amendment as such without also trespassing upon the main resolution; the two are so interwoven. You have a motion that the hours be extended indefinitely, and an amendment which extends the hours for a certain definite period. I think even a Philadelphia or a sea lawyer would find it very hard to establish the dividing line between the two. It is difficult to discuss the amendment without in some way infringing upon the main motion.