

Extension of Sittings

[*English*]

I want to address every one of those paragraphs. I will number them because they need to be explained carefully. In my opinion, this motion, which strangely resembles the motion in June, was drafted hurriedly and in a sloppy fashion. Paragraph one, by accident or design states that the House will meet on the days and at the times specified in Standing Order 24. This precludes sitting on Saturdays or Sundays because the Standing Order speaks only of Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. We do not know the Government's real intentions, but it had better not try Saturday or Sunday sittings because the Standing Orders say that it cannot do so.

The Minister proposed to the House in his speech a few minutes ago that if we want to sit Saturday or Sunday, the Government is open to that kind of proposal. His own motion prevents that from happening. I cannot see how he can have it both ways. He cannot make a proposal for study by the House today which says we cannot sit any other day but the days called for by Standing Order 24, then make a proposal while on his feet saying that we can sit Saturday and Sunday. He will have to make up his mind on that one.

• (1230)

Paragraph two, and I will not read it because Hon. Members can follow it in the Order Paper, states that the Speaker shall adjourn the House at three o'clock on Fridays. This is already provided for in Standing Order 24. It is redundant, to say the least. It is another instance, therefore, of bad drafting by the Government and demonstrates the Government's inability to put its business before the House in an orderly and proper manner.

Mr. McDermid: You are reaching, J.-R.

Mr. Gauthier: No, I am not reaching, I am just trying to show how badly drafted this is. The Minister of housing, the Minister for the ill-housed, is trying to make a comment. I am not reaching, I am just making sure he understands that we have analysed this.

Mr. Allmand: The Minister for the homeless.

Mr. Gauthier: The Minister for the homeless, as he is called.

Mr. McDermid: That is a great filibuster.

Mr. Gauthier: It is not a filibuster. Democratically, I have time to speak on this motion. I have listened to the Minister carefully. I have limited time. If he wants me

to go on for an unlimited time, I can do that as well. I have all kinds of notes and tons of things to say, but if the Minister does not mind, I would rather that he keep quiet and give me a chance to put my comments.

Paragraph four of the motion refers to proceeding to Government Orders at 6 p.m. or at the conclusion of Private Members' Business. We know that there will be no Private Members' Business because there is no Private Members' Business before the House. Why was that put into the motion? I do not know, but again, it shows sloppiness and disorder in the Government's drafting of this motion.

Standing Orders 86 and 88 state that at least two weeks' notice must elapse before a Private Members' Notice of Motion or public Bill can be taken up. Hon. Members know that there are motions and Bills on the Order Paper right now. I have a few. I think I have five or six motions on the Order Paper myself because that is what we have to do. We put motions on the Order Paper so that we will have a chance of getting at least one pulled in the draw.

You know the game, Mr. Speaker. Twenty items are called, and if I want mine to be one of those called for debate at private Members' hour, I must put 20 or 25 notices on the Order Paper so that I will get a chance to have one drawn. However, there will not be a draw for two weeks. Yet the motion deals with Private Members' Business. That again is an example of bad drafting, unless the Government intends us to sit through January, February, and March, but at least for two weeks hence. If the Government intends that, it should say so openly. It should not give us this business of saying that Private Members' Business is suspended. It cannot be suspended because it does not exist. This again is a matter of simple, common logic.

We on this side must assume that this motion was put in order to expedite the passage of the Government's so-called free trade Bill through the House. Are we also to assume that the Government intends the Bill to be before the House for longer than two weeks? I suppose that is a logical conclusion since government Members are basing their arguments for the proposal that is before us on the assumption of two weeks at least. Are we also to assume that the Government intends the Bill to proceed without any Private Members' Business being dealt with in the House, or does the Government intend the motion to be extended indefinitely, for God only knows how long? However, the motion does not say that.