

*Extension of Sittings*

**Mr. Keeper:** Substitute "tedium".

**Mr. Speaker:** We have already had one call to order. I think that perhaps we should stay on the intellectual level which was set by those who commenced this debate. I do not want any Member of this House imputing any kind of motive to any other Member. I am sure that the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Birds Hill would not have intended that at all.

**Mr. Blaikie:** I certainly did not intend anything unparliamentary, Mr. Speaker. I certainly did not intend to attribute eloquence to the Hon. Member.

The fact remains that we often fall into the habit of accusing each other of having less respect than our opponents for parliamentary tradition and for the House. The fact remains that when people feel strongly about issues, they are wont to do within the rules, and sometimes beyond the rules, everything that they feel driven to do at that point in order to live out the strength with which they feel their views on any particular subject. I recall Members opposite in this House ringing the bells for 16 days, charging the Chair, et cetera. I think that these are things that we should keep in mind when we hear those kinds of comments.

What is happening here I want to speak to from the perspective of one who has been involved since the last parliament in the whole question of parliamentary reform.

**Mr. Lewis:** Procedurally?

**Mr. Blaikie:** Procedurally.

I want to speak to the question of the parliamentary calendar which is all wrapped up in what the Government is trying to do here. The Government claims the right, under the Standing Order that the Parliamentary Secretary cited just before he sat down, to change the Standing Order. I want to suggest that the Government does not have the right to change the Standing Order with respect to the parliamentary calendar that it claimed. It has the right, in the Standing Orders, to move a motion for the extension of hours with respect to the last two weeks of June. That right it has. That is a right that was unanimously agreed to in this House with respect to the rules.

Certainly, if that is all that the Government was trying to do today, then no one would have been able to raise their voice at all. It would be able to say that this is a provision of the Standing Orders that was adopted by the House. The Government would be well within its rights to do so. In my judgment, the Government is not within its rights to do this, unless one wants to maintain that by virtue of the clause that the Parliamentary Secretary cited that the Government has it within its power to change all the Standing Orders whenever it wants and whenever in the Government's judgment it does not like the Standing Orders, and it can unilaterally change whatever it wants about the Standing Orders.

What is at stake in the judgment that you have to make, Mr. Speaker, is whether or not the Government can at any time it likes use the Standing Order which the Parliamentary Secretary cited to change any or all of the Standing Orders that it deems to stand in the way of what it regards as the appropriate legislative agenda.

With respect, therefore, to what the Government proposes to change concerning the parliamentary calendar, I say that the parliamentary calendar is something which the Standing Orders clearly provide can only be changed in a manner consistent with the way it is laid down. That is to say, if the Government wants the House to sit beyond the calendar, then it has to go to you, Mr. Speaker. That is a judgment that Your Honour has to make, not a judgment that the majority of the House can make.

I said this last summer, once maybe we can get away with it, but twice and it is gone. We went through a lot of work to get a parliamentary calendar. We went through a lot of work to humanize this place so that Members of Parliament and their families could have some notion of when it was that they would have time away from Ottawa.

I do not understand for the life of me why this Government is determined to destroy that particular notion. It is not as if it has not had the time to get through its legislative agenda. If it has not got it through, then it has no one to blame but itself. Only recently it rose and said that it got through more Bills than any other Parliament in history. If that is true, that is not only a testimony to it but to the co-operation which the Opposition is able to demonstrate when we feel that the Government is dealing with us in good faith and reasonably.

The fact of the matter is, particularly of late, one does not know from one day to the next what the Government is going to call.

**Mr. Lewis:** Not true.

**Mr. Blaikie:** The Parliamentary Secretary got up to talk about what a wonderful thing the Government was doing. It was introducing this motion under Government Orders so that there would be 48 hours notice. We are lucky around here if we get 48 minutes notice with respect to what Bill is going to be debated next.

**Mr. Lewis:** Not true.

**Mr. Blaikie:** I find it very, very irritating to hear that coming from the Parliamentary Secretary.

**Mr. Lewis:** This is not procedure, it is debate.

**Mr. Blaikie:** A lot of what was intended by the Special Committee on the Reform of the House of Commons has turned out very, very well. We know that just recently there was a Private Members' Bill that went through the whole system and was passed. We see the committees working in