

Business of the House

Mr. Garson: I must again rise on the point of order. I submit that the matter which is before the house at the present time is the point of order that the amendment is frivolous. I think we are entitled to have that ruled upon before we proceed to the next matter.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The point of order raised by the member for Montmagny-L'islet (Mr. Lesage) is that the amendment before the house is a frivolous one. I am ready to hear the leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew) on that point.

Mr. Drew: You see, Mr. Speaker, it would help a great deal if I were able to finish a single sentence, because that is exactly what I am dealing with. I was assuming, and perhaps wrongly, that the hon. member who raised the question about public money being wasted was speaking seriously, and was raising that in relation to his point of order that this was a frivolous motion. There was, of course, no other possible reason for him to raise it. If he will permit me to continue, and will follow the sequence, I would point out—

Mr. Warren: You cannot continue all night.

Mr. Drew: I was simply pointing out that the motion introduced by the member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), and which has been before us all day, is one that could have been disposed of long ago.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Drew: I do want you to hear me, Mr. Speaker. We have been dealing not simply with a question as to whether we would discuss one measure or another, but whether or not this house was going to sit all night and consequently not only be unable to do a job tonight but unable to do the work of this house tomorrow. That has been the real issue before the members of this house.

Mr. Warren: Why?

Mr. Drew: May I in courtesy answer the question of the hon. member? I shall explain to the hon. member, since he asked me, that the reason is that there was a motion introduced by the member for Winnipeg North Centre this morning, and there was an amendment introduced in relation to that motion. The motion was under discussion until early this afternoon—

Mr. Warren: Yes, all day.

Mr. Drew: I wish to explain to the hon. member, and give him an answer to his question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I will hear the leader of the opposition on the point of order.

[Mr. Drew.]

Mr. Drew: I should like to finish my explanation to the hon. member in answer to his question. I shall just finish by saying that this afternoon, at a time when the hon. member was not here, there was another amendment introduced upon which a vote has recently been taken. That brings him up to date, except that the motion which has just been made introduced a further amendment.

Mr. Warren: I was here.

Mr. Drew: I am very happy to know that. Therefore we have brought the hon. member up to date on the proceedings.

When we come to the question of whether or not the motion is frivolous, may I suggest that this is a very late hour in the day to suggest that this amendment is frivolous.

Mr. Warren: It is not late.

Mr. Drew: I do regret that you are having so much difficulty in hearing this discussion. I shall wait until you are able to hear me without interruption. We have all day been discussing the original motion, and motions by way of amendment, which had to do with the time during which this house should sit today. Unless all the motions by way of amendment were frivolous, and that point has not been raised up to this time, then this motion must certainly not be frivolous. I say that because the substance of the motion is precisely the same, and there is simply a difference in time. The opposition is making an effort to co-operate with the government and find an hour that is agreeable to them. We are making that effort by the process of trial and error, or shall we say trial and refusal.

We now have before the house a suggestion that we should not, in view of the fact that we are approaching so close to the hour of ten o'clock, close off sharply at ten o'clock, but we should extend the time for another half hour. If members will accept this motion now, then they will have an opportunity to pave the way for an orderly discussion of the business which is coming before the house tomorrow. I suggest that unless any motion by way of amendment to set a time for the sitting of this house is regarded as frivolous, then this cannot be frivolous because the only difference between this and any other motion is that we have in our constant efforts to meet the wishes of the government—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Drew: —introduced a new time in the motion, in the hope that the members would give it their approval.