

Business of the House

Mr. Noseworthy: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I should like the member for Coast-Capilano (Mr. Sinclair) to withdraw the motion.

Mr. Sinclair: I shall be happy to withdraw. The only reason I made it was that the hon. member was obviously on his feet, and you were not looking in his direction.

Mr. Speaker: The motion has been withdrawn, and I call upon the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mrs. Fairclough).

Mrs. Ellen L. Fairclough (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, first of all may I thank the member for Coast-Capilano (Mr. Sinclair) for withdrawing his motion, and also the member for York South (Mr. Noseworthy) for requesting that the motion be withdrawn. I realize that in the confusion of the voting and the subsequent announcing of pairs there was some doubt who had first claimed the attention of the Speaker. I do thank these gentlemen most sincerely for giving me this opportunity.

I should like to speak now to the motion which is before the house concerning the extension of hours. Much has been said already this day concerning the consideration of matters which are now before this house. Inasmuch as several members have already announced personal reasons for voting for or against this particular motion, I think I might also state the position in which I find myself as an individual member of this house.

I happen to be one of those who, during the past month, have been sitting continuously on committees, on two committees at one time. On more than one occasion this has been the cause of some embarrassment to me because I felt that my place was in both committees. Both of these committees were considering matters which were of great interest to me, and upon which I wished to make representations. We were sitting from 9.30 in the morning, adjourning at 10.30 to go to the second committee, and sitting there until one o'clock. Then we would come into the house at two or 2.30, as the case might be, leaving the house again at three or 3.30 to return to the committee. We would sit there until six o'clock or later, and then often be called upon for some duties after that. We were still expected by our constituents to answer their letters, to look after matters which they had asked us to look after for them.

Personally I am quite willing to work all night. It would not be the first time I have done it. I have been doing it all my life, and I have managed to live through it. But there is a limit to the hours during which

you can transact business in the departments of this government; there is a limit to the hours during which you can receive secretarial assistance. It is a physical impossibility to sit in committees for those hours, and still attend to the work which a member is required to do outside this house. So far as I am concerned personally, if this house decides to sit all night I shall be here. It will be very interesting to see just how many members of this house will be here. There are certain considerations, of course. I wonder what plans are going to be made for restaurant services, because you cannot sit all night long without food.

I have sat in committee meetings until the small hours of the morning, both in organization work and in municipal councils. I have full knowledge of the type of thinking that is done in the small hours of the morning. Tempers are frayed and judgment is poor. Here, in the highest tribunal in this country, we are asked to pass upon some of the most important legislation that has come before this house for some time, and to do so at a time of the day or night when human vitality is at its lowest ebb. I claim, Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely contrary to the best judgment of the members of this house. I do not think any man or woman in this country would want his personal affairs decided by a group of people who had been considering a matter for twenty-four hours. I would not want anyone making any decision on any matter affecting my personal affairs after they had been considering them for twenty hours. I would doubt very much the wisdom and judgment of the wisest man in the land after the expiration of that period of time. I feel, Mr. Speaker, that if this house persists in sitting all night long tonight, they are sabotaging the people of this nation who depend upon them to use wise and considered judgment in the matters which are before this house.

I cannot feel that the members of this house are really serious in pursuing this course. I know that within the last few hours we have debated at some length, and at times with some heat, on this question. But I would ask the members to reconsider, and in order to give them an opportunity for reconsideration I propose to move, seconded by the hon. member for Lanark (Mr. Blair):

That the motion be amended by striking out all the words after "That" to the end of the question and substituting the following:

"for this day's sitting the house shall after the dinner recess sit from 8 p.m. to 12 p.m.

Mr. George A. Drew (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the motion that has just been put offers to the house an