

Privilege—Mr. Kaplan

Mr. Riis: You adjourned the debate yesterday.

Mr. Lewis: I am telling my hon. friend the intention for today. If my hon. friend, who implored me last night for information, wishes to hear the information now, he will let me tell him.

We intend to call the motion for debate today. There is absolutely no intention on the part of the Government to move the motion under Standing Order 57 today or Monday. There is absolutely no intention on the part of any member of the Government to extend hours today or Monday. We intend to have a normal day's debate which would have included from ten o'clock until 11 o'clock and from 12.15 until two o'clock, Private Members' Hour beginning at two o'clock. We intend to call the motion for debate after routine proceedings on Monday and continuing until 10 o'clock at night with the exception of the normal Question Period and normal Private Members' Hour.

It is up to the Opposition to decide whether it wants delay or debate.

An Hon. Member: We want our right to speak.

Mr. Speaker: I am, of course, intrigued by the words of the Parliamentary Secretary. Since the Chair has the obligation to ensure that the rules of this place are followed, I point out to Hon. Members that although the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary's words were of interest I am not at all sure that they went to the heart of the matter which is raised by the Hon. Member for York Centre (Mr. Kaplan). However, they do indicate that at least for today there seems to be a firm commitment by the Government that debate will continue.

The Hon. Member for York Centre wishes to rise again, perhaps to comment on some of the statements of the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary. It may be helpful if the Chair indicated its disposition at this time, in view of what the Government has just said. It would be to just adjourn this matter, let debate proceed, and suggest that Hon. Members discuss this matter among themselves. I will then hear further argument on the matter at any moment at which the Hon. Member for York Centre feels it appropriate to raise the matter further. In other words, I will not cut this off. However, the Hon. Member for York Centre has a comment.

• (1030)

Mr. Kaplan: Mr. Speaker, the remedy which I was proposing to urge on you was that you not receive the notice. I feel that I need to say another few words in order to explain, but if the adjournment now is without prejudice to an argument which might convince you not to receive the notice, then I would be sympathetic to adjournment.

However, I want to indicate why a notice, pure and simple, can be a violation of rights of Members. The reason is that this is not a notice like other notices. Other notices provide for a debate, and for a vote. A notice under Standing Order 57

precludes the possibility of debate. Since there is no debate on it, if the matter is taken at face value, merely receiving the notice, settles the issue of how long the debate will take on the substantive matter being closed and when it will be finished.

It is the notice that I submit is the violation of the rights of the Opposition and not the matters that follow subsequent to it.

The Parliamentary Secretary has made an offer. I want to make a counter offer in the interests of trying to resolve this matter. It is that he withdraw the notice. He can always bring it back.

Mr. Speaker: Of course, the Hon. Member for York Centre is a very respected Member of this place and a respected Member of the same fraternity from which I came. He is skillful and always persuasive. However, I think that at this moment it is in the better interests of this place that I adjourn this application on the part of the Hon. Member.

I am inviting Hon. Members to discuss the matter among themselves because this is clearly now becoming a negotiating session across the aisle and, while it certainly would not be the first time it has happened, I suggest to all Hon. Members that it is not appropriate at this moment.

I am asking the Hon. Member for York Centre that he accept my suggestion that this matter be adjourned for now. I invite Hon. Members to have a discussion about the matter and, of course, I will hear the Hon. Member if he feels it is necessary to carry on this discussion at another time.

I am prepared to meet with Hon. Members from both sides if there is anything the Chair can do to assist in this matter. I would ask Hon. Members to accept the Chair's view that at the moment this has gone far enough, given the clear undertaking of the Parliamentary Secretary, at least for today.

Mr. Kaplan: And Monday.

Mr. Speaker: At least for today, and I will hear Hon. Members further if Hon. Members feel it is necessary. I urge Hon. Members to have a discussion on this issue.

I want to make it very clear to Hon. Members, and the public listening to this, that in taking this position the Chair is mindful that the Chair's obligation is to administer and interpret the rules as they are. It is not for me at the moment to say whether this rule is a good rule or a bad rule. However, it is pretty clear.

Having said that, there is nothing in what I say that is intended or in any way should be taken as diminishing the substantive argument that the Hon. Member has put forward with respect to the vital issue that is before the House. The Hon. Member makes very legitimate arguments, and other Hon. Members may make equally legitimate arguments the other way, as to the importance of the debate and the length of the debate.