

Government Orders

of adjournment at 6 p.m., in order to give all members of this House who have not yet had a chance to speak an opportunity to take advantage of their democratic right to speak freely to this important issue. And now, after denying us this opportunity to extend the sitting of the House past 6 p.m., it now wants to sit until midnight.

We are prepared to sit until midnight. However, we would have preferred to continue the debate so that all members of this House would have an opportunity to speak. I do not see why hon. members will not give us that opportunity. They refused to do so yesterday, and they are again refusing today. In any case, the House has our unanimous consent to sit past 6 p.m., until midnight.

Subsequently we may have a chance to make further arrangements with you, Madam Speaker, meaning that when it is the Liberals' turn to speak we intend to ask for permission to share speaking time and have two periods of 10 minutes, thus giving more members a chance to speak.

[English]

Mr. Riis: Madam Speaker, I would perhaps like to make a couple of suggestions. It is our intention to provide an opportunity so that every single member of Parliament who wishes to speak on this issue has that opportunity.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Riis: As a matter of fact, Madam Speaker, earlier today my leader indicated that we are prepared to start earlier in the morning, to speak until midnight every night, to speak on the weekends, Saturdays, Sundays, if that is what is necessary so that everyone has an opportunity to make a serious speech on this issue.

The question is that at this point I want to seek unanimous consent—we can discuss this later into the evening in terms of facilitating debate so that all members have an opportunity to speak—and at least agree now that the House sit until twelve o'clock tonight to continue the debate.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Cooper: Madam Speaker, I must say that I am surprised by some of the comments of the House leader for the New Democratic Party who implies to this House—

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

Mr. Cooper: I am sorry. I listened quietly and patiently while your member spoke. Please do me the same courtesy.

Madam Deputy Speaker: If negotiations between parties have to be done on the floor of the House of Commons, maybe we should do it with courtesy.

Mr. Cooper: Madam Speaker, I am surprised when the House leader of the New Democratic Party rises and says that he was surprised by the motion put by the minister. He, of course, was not. I had advised him that that was going to happen and that we were quite prepared to discuss and negotiate any terms and, in fact, we have been carrying on those discussions since early this morning.

In fact, Madam Speaker, you will know that this side co-operated as did all members of the House, in making sure that the New Democratic Party had an opportunity to move a subamendment when its first subamendment had been ruled out of order. We do not need to take any lessons in terms of co-operation and fairness on this side of the House, and in fact I think all members of the House.

We are quite prepared to sit until two, three, four or five in the morning. We are prepared to sit all night because we would like every member of this House to have an opportunity to participate in the debate, including the independent members with whom I have spoken and who have indicated that they are prepared to sit through the night to have an opportunity to participate in this important debate as well. We are prepared to do that.

I do want to signal, Madam Speaker, that we are prepared to sit until midnight in the hopes that the New Democratic Party members will co-operate not just with the government side, but with all members of this House who wish to speak tonight and that they will reconsider their position and allow this House to sit beyond twelve o'clock this evening because, as they know and all of us know, we have a large number of members who wish to participate in this debate.

Miss Grey: Madam Speaker, I would just like to intervene briefly to say that it was my impression, especially from the NDP, that this House was called back to debate the gulf issue. I find it very ironic—and many other people do too, I am sure—to say: Why would we then cut it off at midnight?