

Motion for Adjournment

House of Commons. Some weeks ago the hon. member for Timiskaming appealed to me as house leader to state clearly what the program of the government was. I stated it clearly in the house and elsewhere as required. I have been asked by ministers on this side of the house to add further items of legislation which they regard as important and which they thought should be passed before the house adjourned. But from the beginning I have adhered strictly to the understanding that I would add nothing further to the list of items that would be dealt with before the house adjourned. Hon. members opposite understand that, but the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre feels that he occupies a special place in the house and enjoys a special status and that at the opportune moment, after he has chosen his timing very carefully, he can say "The house will not adjourn until my special interest is satisfied". He served notice earlier this week that he would frustrate adjournment and he has done so today and thus placed the house in a totally absurd position.

We have before us a simple adjournment motion indicating the time at which we will adjourn, depending upon the securing of royal assent, and indicating the time for the resumption of the session. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre knows full well that on an adjournment motion of this kind it is totally improper to debate issues of substance.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has led the house into an absurd situation because, first of all, he forced us to deal on an adjournment motion with the substantive issue of pensions for civil servants. Then the hon. member for York-Humber (Mr. Cowan) felt it appropriate, and justly so, to raise the question of the illegal filling of Lake Ontario. He was followed by the hon. member for Compton-Frontenac (Mr. Latulippe) who rose to tell us that the financial system of Canada should be changed. All of these matters were to be settled before we adjourn the house. Then the hon. member for Mackenzie (Mr. Korchinski) said quite properly, "I have other grievances and other matters to raise on the floor of the house. Surely I should have an opportunity to do so before we adjourn." That is the situation.

There is no admission or statement by the government that every grievance is satisfied or that every claim on the government is fulfilled. All we have before us is a simple adjournment motion. I am surprised that the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, who

is an acknowledged authority on the rules of the house, would take this misguided course of action.

An hon. Member: Explain.

Mr. MacEachen: By taking this course of action today he has obviously put the house in the absurd position that on a simple adjournment motion it is possible to ask that the financial system of Canada be reformed before we adjourn the house.

We talk about the image of parliament. Everybody makes wonderful speeches about it. Well, the Canadian people must have received a wonderful impression of parliament today. The responsibility for creating such an impression lies on the doorstep of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre who decided, after the procedure under which we would adjourn had been clearly understood, that he would place before the house his special problem and project. I assume the hon. member is sincerely dedicated to this proposition, but I think his dedication is misguided and his action today has been irresponsible. It has created a very bad impression because the people of Canada may think that we cannot even get the house adjourned, we cannot carry out our own business efficiently and successfully, without getting into a wrangle and in this case over a simple adjournment motion.

His Honour the Speaker has ruled already on the irrelevancy of the debate. If this discussion were relevant the amendment would have been in order. However, it was declared out of order. Following that the Speaker has been on his feet trying to get the house to come to some sense of sanity and deal with the simple motion before it. The only plea I make is that we return to sanity and deal with this motion on the clear understanding that the problem about which the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre feels so strongly can be debated when we resume in the fall. If we take the view that the house is not in a position to adjourn until every last grievance is satisfied, then let us decide today to have continuous sittings of the House of Commons from the beginning of the year until the end.

Mr. Knowles: Would the minister permit a question?

Mr. MacEachen: I want to conclude by making a remark about the right hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker). This will be a very friendly remark so I want him to relax.