

hours. Today is Friday. It is the last day of the week and usually the House does not sit on Friday evening. I for one, and I speak only for my party because I do not wish to involve the Progressive Conservative Party, believe I speak for all my colleagues on this side when I offer, if NDP members deem it necessary, to extend the sitting hours indefinitely today so as to allow all members who want to speak today to do so. My learned colleague, the House leader for the New Democratic Party, is well aware that any matter of government policy may be dealt with on the adjournment motion. NDP members may take advantage of that motion to speak on any other subject, either on the veterans' pensions we willingly granted a short time ago with the co-operation of all parties, or on the Alaska pipeline or on the \$35 paid to pensioners by the Liberal government. I repeat that we are prepared to allow NDP members to sit indefinitely today until they have fully made their point on one or several government policies. Once again, they are free to accept or reject our proposal, that is their political judgment. We, as members of Parliament, shall have no choice but to return next Monday, if such is the wish of NDP members.

So, Mr. Speaker, I simply want to reiterate my thanks to all those who deserve them, and remind the House of the parliamentary spirit that has prevailed until now, banking of course on that of the New Democratic Party, so that we can, in orderly fashion, without abuse and humanely, discuss fully a matter of interest to them, without in any way penalizing unduly people who do not share their views, all the more so when their objections concern measures that have been passed according to parliamentary rules and an act passed by this Parliament.

So, once again, Mr. Speaker, in closing I express the wish that, with regard to the future, hon. members of all parties will take advantage of the summer break, whether it starts today or next week, to reflect seriously on what amendments could be made to some of our rules with a view to ultimately making this Parliament, while respecting its spirit, of course, more efficient, more modern and also more humane.

● (1500)

[English]

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, before beginning my remarks on this motion may I take the opportunity while I am on my feet to correct what might have been a misimpression flowing from remarks I made on a procedural matter earlier this day. I was commenting on the fact that I did not at that moment have in my hands copies of *Hansard*. I would not want that to be interpreted as a criticism of the *Hansard* staff. As the House well knows, we sat exceptionally long hours last night, and if there is fault to be assigned for *Hansard* not being ready for the 11 a.m. session, it is with those of us who speak, rather than with the reporters who record the proceedings of this House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Summer Recess

Mr. Clark: Let me make some beginning remarks in response to the observations of the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Pinard). I think that he will allow me, and that the House will agree, to congratulate him on a very graceful act of self-congratulations for the manner in which matters have been proceeding through the House. I will have a little more to say on that in just a moment.

Before doing that, however, Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to the proposition that he has made to the New Democratic Party regarding the possibility of this House not seeing the clock tonight and allowing members of Parliament who want to speak on the adjournment debate to have an exceptionally long Friday. Certainly, on behalf of my colleagues in the official opposition, I can say that arrangement would be acceptable to us. We would agree to a procedure of that kind if it were to be proposed and necessary.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: Let me deal now with some of the matters that the President of the Privy Council, the House leader of the government, raised. He talked about the legislation that has been brought forward. I will say on his behalf that he had the good grace to admit that most of the legislation was proposed and prepared by governments other than his own. He admitted that indeed what this government has done, primarily, in this first session of a majority Parliament, when the nation faces urgent issues, is deal with housekeeping matters, with matters that were already prepared, with matters that would have been brought forward in any event. There has been very little indication of any new initiatives by this government.

I must say in passing that I noted with a certain humour that the President of the Privy Council took credit for the special committees of Parliament looking into matters which are of interest to members of this House. He well knows, and members well know, and students of the parliamentary process should know, that what this government tried to do was run around the rules of Parliament by establishing task forces that will report to ministers and not to Parliament. It was only after pressure from this side of the House, and this party in particular, that the government followed the rules and practices to respect the privileges of the House of Commons. Instead of having task forces which answer to ministers and could then be forgotten, the government reverted to establishment of special committees of the House of Commons which will report to the House and whose recommendations will be debatable by the whole House under the eyes of the country.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: I hear the hon. member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) who speaks much more often and much more eloquently from his seat than on his feet—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!