

Procedure and Organization

or another. However, I do not quarrel with this approach. There is nothing wrong with it at all, and if we go to the French text of Standing Order 42 (1) it seems clear to me that—

[Translation]

If a motion concerns the sitting times of the house, it can be made without previous notice and, in this sense, the motion of the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams) should be accepted by the Chair.

Here again, from a strictly logical point of view, I find it difficult to accept this motion, because under our parliamentary tradition and long established practice in the house, the only motion which is always in order and which is not subject to debate, is the motion demanding that the house do now adjourn. It seems that we are about to accept another kind of motion which proposes not only that the house do now adjourn, but at a fixed hour. The danger of course, is that such an application of the rules of the house may lend itself to abuses, but I am not here to make a decision on that point. I can only come to the conclusion that the only possible interpretation of the provisions of Standing Order 42 (1) is that the motion of the hon. member should be put to the house.

[English]

The hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams) seconded by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) moves that the house adjourn at four o'clock this afternoon.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I wish to say a few words on the motion, and I have an amendment to it which I should like to move as well. First may I impress as strongly as I can, in spite of the tension and in spite of the feeling in the house at this time, that the reason for asking that this motion be agreed to, the stated desire of the hon. member for Calgary North, and I state it as well, is that at this point we should not close off discussion on the question of our rules and submit it to the kind of confrontation that has been proposed.

Last Thursday when I suggested that the house adjourn so that the house leaders might meet, it looked hopeless. We were in positions that were irreconcilable, but we did make some progress at those meetings. I submit that the fact that we made some progress is now in black and white on the records of this house, in what was said yesterday. It was made clear yesterday by the four of us who

had participated in these discussions that we all moved to some extent. We did not move sufficiently to reach agreement, but I submit that there was a sufficient narrowing of the difference among us that it would be worth while to have further meetings of the house leaders to see if we cannot come to some agreement.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I realize how important it is to allow hon. members all possible freedom in the discussion which we are having this afternoon, but at the same time the hon. member knows that there is a very specific motion before the house that the house adjourn at four o'clock. I wonder whether the hon. member would not agree that he should limit his contribution to the motion itself. If the motion is used simply for the purpose of re-opening the whole debate, I think that this would not be correct procedurally. I am sure that the hon. member will limit his remarks to the very narrow confines of the motion now before the house.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Of course I accept your ruling, Mr. Speaker. But I felt that it was my right to state as briefly as I can my reasons for supporting the proposition that the house should adjourn this afternoon. I quite agree that if we get only the two hours that would come from adjourning at four o'clock, or if we get only the smaller amount of time that would come from the amendment which I propose to move, we cannot necessarily do the job of reconciling our differences in that period of time, but it is a gesture. If we do adjourn rather than proceeding with the debate on the closure motion until one o'clock tonight, at least it is a gesture which says to all members of parliament, and to the country, that we are still trying to get somewhere. Talking and discussing is better than ending it at this point on the basis of confrontation. That is my reason for supporting this motion.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I think this motion is just as valid as was my motion last Thursday, perhaps even more valid. Last Thursday we were at loggerheads. We had not been speaking to each other on this issue for a number of weeks. However, we got together and held meetings. I submit that if the house accepts this motion, we could again meet together and we might move sufficiently on both sides to reach an agreement instead of settling on the basis of