

calling for reference back, I think there is a good chance that Your Honour would find it in order.

The point I wish to make is a very practical one and takes into account the situation in which we find ourselves. I would remind you, Sir, that it happened that Your Honour, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was in the chair a week ago this afternoon when we were under closure. Certain amendments had been moved and Your Honour felt it would not be fair for the time of the committee to be taken up by procedural arguments but, rather, that without establishing precedents, certain amendments which had been put forward that day should be allowed.

• (5:30 p.m.)

The point I wish to make is that again we are under closure. At the moment, we are debating an amendment in my name. Presumably, a vote on that amendment will come soon, but one cannot be sure of that. I know that if our amendment is voted on and disposed of in one way or another we have others we should like to move. Hon. members in the official opposition have made no secret of the fact that they, too, have other amendments they would like to move. I do not see any opportunity for hon. members of the Social Credit party to get in even one amendment to the motion for third reading before this debate is closed off on Friday. I wonder whether Your Honour might not take these circumstances into consideration and give some thought to the possibility of allowing this subamendment, even though it is on a separate subject, so that hon. members in the fourth party in the House might have a chance of a vote on a matter which they feel is important.

I wish to say quite candidly that I am asking for something which is procedurally irregular. But this is an irregular week. We are having to operate under conditions which are not normal. Normally, on third reading of a bill such as this, we could put forward 75 different amendments proposing reference back to reconsider one after another of the clauses. But in the present circumstances we shall not have an opportunity to do that. Accordingly, I ask whether Your Honour might not consider making a ruling in the spirit in which you made rulings last Wednesday afternoon.

Mr. McCleave: I think this suggestion carries with it a measure of airness, Mr. Speaker. Though I may be next in line, and may be the one who is to be gored by this impromptu speech I am making now, I would support what has been said by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre as a reasonable suggestion in the interests of all parties in the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I indicated I was prepared to make a ruling on the procedural point raised concerning the acceptability of the proposed subamendment. I shall make such a ruling, now. But first, I wish to refer to the very reasonable and lucid argument of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) which has just been ably supported by the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave).

Hon. members who put forward arguments of this kind really place the Chair in a difficult position. I say this because, after all, it is not the Chair which has decided that the House of Commons shall operate in the circum-

stances in which we are operating today. It is hon. members who determine that we shall operate under a time limitation. So, while I understand and am very much moved, by the appeal put forward by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants, I do feel that if I were to base my ruling on that sort of agreement abuses could arise in the future. I have concluded, therefore, that I have to rule in accordance with the precedents binding the Chair.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre mentioned the situation which arose a week ago today when we were operating under a time allocation order. I think there was some difference, there. As I recall it, the time available between the end of the question period and the time at which the votes were to be taken, amounted to an hour and a half, or, maybe, two hours. I do not recall the number of amendments which were submitted, but their number was considerable. As the hon. member has said, I took some responsibility in my initial ruling as chairman of the committee, and I think that ruling was followed by my colleagues with respect to subsequent amendments. I felt that in this unusual situation, and in order that hon. members might have an opportunity to express their views on the amendments, they might be allowed in those circumstances. Indeed, there was no time in which to give much study to the procedural aspect. On this occasion, however, there are two more days of debate left. I feel there is considerable difference between the two situations and I would not want the Chair to be placed in the position of finding this argument placed before it whenever a motion has been agreed to of the kind under which we are presently operating.

The other point is this. It is really in the hands of hon. members, not in the hands of the Chair, as to when the amendment of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre is dealt with. When it has been dealt with it will be open to other hon. members to make amendments to the main motion. It seems to me that this is a matter for regulation between hon. members, particularly those to the left of the chair, to determine which hon. members should have the opportunity to propose further amendments.

I say at once that if the subamendment proposed by the hon. member for Abitibi had been proposed as an amendment to the main motion there would be no hesitation in my mind about accepting it. If I were in the chair, and if that subamendment were proposed as an amendment to the main motion, I would accept it. But the Chair has responsibilities from a procedural standpoint. What the hon. member for Abitibi is asking the Chair to accept is a very reasonable amendment, but he is dealing with another section of clause one.

The hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin) has argued very persuasively that as far as the question of relevance is concerned the amendment of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and the proposed subamendment both reduce the tax load falling upon the taxpayer. I have no difficulty in agreeing with that contention. The difficulty is that when an hon. member proposes a subamendment he is under the constraint that he must not enlarge on, or differ in substance from, the amendment he is purporting to further amend. The amendment now before the House in the name of the hon. member for