

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

**Mr. Lewis:** Mr. Chairman, I have had some brief discussions with the House Leaders of the other Parties. I would suggest that in the event the Chair wishes to reserve on this decision and consider it, it would be helpful to all Members of the House if we were to agree on a time to come back to the House for a decision. I am not trying in any way to suggest that you rush this decision or anything like that, but if you found it appropriate, we might be prepared to convene to hear your decision at seven-thirty and to continue with clause-by-clause consideration in the meantime. If we can work out a specific time I think it will be helpful to all Parties.

**The Chairman:** I would like to thank the Hon. Member for Kingston and The Islands, the Hon. Member for Kamloops, the Minister of State, the Hon. Member for York South—Weston and the Hon. Member for Peace River for their comments on this procedural matter. I will in fact take this matter under advisement for some time and I was going to suggest that we come back at the call of the Chair. However, I understand it would be easier if the Members had a specific time at which to return. If the suggestion made by the Hon. Minister is acceptable to the other two House Leaders, the Chair would also find it acceptable.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gauthier:** Mr. Chairman, I do not want to rush you in your decision or in any way ask you how you intend to proceed. Standing Order 57 states that immediately before the Order of the Day, the Minister may do what he has done, that is, move closure in accordance with Standing Order 57.

A point of order was raised. Now, on the Minister's suggestion, you say we shall proceed to debate Clause 2, which is not yet before us, because the Orders of the Day have not yet been read. That poses a problem . . . Listen carefully. There seems to be something missing.

If there is nothing before the House, there is nothing before the House. We can't invent something.

If the House agrees to proceed with the debate on Clause 2, the Chair must put a thing called Bill C-2 before the House. Then, we shall proceed with the debate.

I do not understand. I therefore ask the Chair to tell us how—the suggestion is a good one—but how do we proceed? I would like to know how we are to get out of this.

**The Chairman:** I shall reserve my decision in any event. There, I think that is settled.

My next decision is that I intend to adjourn for some time. If the House, if Hon. Members had wanted to continue the debate by agreement, that could have been done, but I see, I think that it might be in the interest of the House of Commons at this time and of the Committee to adjourn for a while.

So I intend to adjourn. All that I ask you now is whether you have a time to suggest to me. I will certainly take more than an hour, at least. But I think it would be preferable to have a set time so that all Hon. Members know when to come back.

I think that the suggestion of 7.30 p.m. seems reasonable to me and if there is no further objection . . .

[*English*]

SITTING SUSPENDED

**The Chairman:** Is it the wish of the Committee to suspend the sitting to the call of the bell?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

The sitting of the Committee was suspended at 4.25 p.m.

[*Editor's note: For continuation of proceedings see Volume B*]