

Business of the House

afternoon the House decides to adjourn, to take the rest of the debate on Monday and Tuesday. As I say, I think there is enough understanding among us that we do not need to amend the order with respect to this phase of the matter. In fact, I point out that although the proposed motion is a lengthy one, it really does only two things in so far as the present debate is concerned. It provides for two extra hours on Monday morning and then it provides—in other words, there is no closure on this motion—that if the debate is ended by some time Tuesday night, the time for the vote on third reading will be just after prayers on Wednesday next. It seems to me this is a sensible proposal that has been worked out by consultation, and we are happy to support it.

● (1220)

Although I said that all the motion does with regard to the present debate is the two things I have indicated, it does, of course, do other things that are quite usual at this point in a session. It provides for a few days off for the other place to consider Bill C-84 before we meet for royal assent and then adjournment of the session until October 12. I note, in that connection, that the government House leader has not indicated when a new session will start, whether on October 13 or later. I suppose the government wants to keep its options open on that point. By that time, however, this first session of the thirtieth parliament will have lasted for two years and 13 days so I would hope that a second session would start fairly soon.

While I am on my feet, Mr. Speaker, and while we are discussing matters of the remaining day or two, may I raise one other point. Many references have been made in recent weeks to Bill C-242, a bill having to do with prohibiting smoking in—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. President of the Privy Council has sought unanimous consent to put a motion at this time. Other points of order can certainly be raised, but I am anxious to get some sort of comment on this matter and I should like to keep discussion confined to this area. I do not want to get into debate on the motion itself, which can be debated later.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Your Honour, I do not think I was as far afield as you might have imagined as, after all, you could not be at our House leaders' meeting. One of the points we agreed upon this morning was that no other business would be brought forward, but there was discussion about Bill C-242 and whether it could be dealt with unanimously and without debate. It seems to me the government has some justification for not wanting to bring in its own bill, but I hope that the option might be kept open for a few moments, by unanimous consent, between now and Tuesday night just to conclude third reading of Bill C-242 as it stands. As I say, this was part of the discussion this morning. It was agreed by the government House leader that no other business would be attempted between now and next Wednesday, but there was this discussion about Bill C-242.

As far as the motion itself is concerned, my colleagues and I join in giving unanimous consent for putting the motion, and we are prepared to vote for it.

[Translation]

Mr. Fortin: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order raised by the House leader, I would like to point out that we took part in the discussions with the leaders of the other parties and we want to confirm that we agree on the motion moved by the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Sharp). Since the votes taken last night, everyone realizes that we cannot amend Bill C-84 at this stage, and it has become an established fact. Therefore the most important stage becomes third reading. As far as we are concerned, it would be desirable that the debate on third reading begin as soon as possible to save the time of the House and allow the greatest number of members who want to take part in this debate to express their views on third reading.

Mr. Speaker, this could be done easily since I personally maintain the same position I took in the House last night concerning motions considered at the report stage, that is motions Nos. 24, 26, 27, 30, 31, 33, 37 and 43. Therefore we could proceed very shortly with the third reading.

[English]

Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, although I was in the building until midnight last night and have been here for some time today, it was not until the government House leader rose on his motion that I was aware of the plans he announced. I am not saying that critically, but merely to explain that I am not quite clear exactly what it is that is being proposed; but more so, I am not at all clear why it should be necessary to change what, over the years I have been here, I find to be adequate procedures for dealing with legislation in this House. It is only because of the government's headstrong attitude in wanting to rush this vote through that this proposal is being made, and any urgency that exists to get this vote passed soon escapes me. I cannot understand why the government House leader wishes to get this vote through so early.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. With all due respect, the hon. member is entering upon debate. I may say it is very clear and I think it should be understood that it is not a provision of the motion that in any event the vote will take place on Wednesday. The provision is that if the debate is concluded on Tuesday, the vote will take place on Wednesday afternoon. It does not say the vote will take place in any event and therefore terminate the debate. It is simply an arrangement for the convenience of members to know that if the vote is finalized on third reading by Tuesday evening, the vote will take place on Wednesday afternoon.

Mr. Clarke: I am not certain about that, Mr. Speaker. I thought it might be appropriate to explain my thinking on this. I have no objection whatever to the government adjourning this House at whatever date it wishes, but it is not my intention to give unanimous consent.

Mr. Speaker: The unanimous consent that is sought is simply for the introduction of the motion. The motion itself is debatable, and in fact votable, and opposition can be registered in that way. The motion cannot be put at this time without unanimous consent. The President of the Privy Council has requested unanimous consent for putting forward this motion. Is there unanimous consent for putting this motion at this time?