

Proposal for Time Allocation

Mr. Winch: I want to be very clear about the proposal of the hon. member; therefore I would like to ask him whether my interpretation of his proposal is correct. I gather he has made this proposal more than once. As I understand it, the proposal of the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill) is to the effect that clauses 2 and 6 should be held in abeyance and that the official opposition are prepared to deal with the other clauses of the bill at this time. I believe this proposal has been made because of repeated statements by the government that it will take at least four months to draft the regulations and have them approved before the bill is promulgated. I think the suggestion is that in October or thereabouts clauses 2 and 6 would come back to the house and would at that time be passed.

If my assumption is correct, I should like to ask the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre whether this necessarily means—it does to me—that the official opposition are prepared to have a government department working on and producing regulations, the passage of which involves orders in council, without legislative authority having been given. In my opinion, that is what the suggestion must mean. Then, I gather, in October we would come back to clauses 2 and 6. Are we to assume that the regulations having been drafted in the interim period and the remaining clauses of the bill having been passed, clauses 2 and 6 would automatically carry? I am sure the hon. member understands the point I am putting forward.

Mr. Churchill: Mr. Speaker, I dealt with this matter before six o'clock. The hon. member is pretty well correct, but quite briefly I will put it in my own words. I suggested that clauses 2 and 6 should stand until the fall, and I gave the reasons for making this suggestion. First, the regulations have to be prepared and they cannot be ready for four to six months. Evidence given by General Allard and the adjutant general, and agreed to by the Minister of National Defence, was that until those regulations are drafted and approved and the bill is proclaimed, this legislation is not law.

Until this bill is proclaimed and it is law, the regulations cannot take effect; and General Allard said he cannot take any step toward unification until the bill is proclaimed. That puts this matter off until October. I suggested that in the circumstances we pass the rest of the bill now. By inference—and I got that word from the hon. member for

[Mr. Churchill.]

Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) out in the corridor one day—this would give the adjutant general the assurance that he could safely go ahead and draft the regulations and the bill would not be so materially changed in respect of clauses 2 and 6 that his regulations would be thrown out.

Then I suggested that by agreement we would put this bill back on the order paper. As the matter now stands, the bill is in committee of the whole house. I said if this were done we would raise no objection, no points of order and would not participate in debate, and in the fall we would conclude the discussion of clauses 2 and 6, and third reading, in the same amount of time that the government is providing on this occasion, if they desire to impose closure. I also said that no harm would be done in that event and we could deal with other business at this time. I suggested that in exchange for this concession we would advance very rapidly with the adult training bill, the report of the rules committee and interim supply; and I went so far as to say that we would do all these things by six o'clock tomorrow night.

Mr. Winch: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, but the question I asked has not been answered by the hon. member.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I must point out to the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. Winch) that the time allotted to the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill) has expired.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Georges C. Lachance (Lafontaine): Mr. Speaker, hearing the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill) speak of freedom of speech a few minutes ago leads me to reflect that each member may have a personal opinion on this matter just as anyone who takes the trouble of speaking about it.

Recently, I read in a newspaper an article by Mr. Dean, well-known correspondent and newspaperman, in which he wrote about those who preach freedom of speech in order to curtail it in others. I believe that if freedom of speech carries certain rights, it also involves some obligations.

The leader of the government (Mr. McIlraith) introduced a motion under standing order 15A suggesting the allocation of time, specifically two days, to complete debate on Bill No. C-243 in committee of the whole.