

Time Allocation

true that I raised a point of order in that regard and that you overruled me. So it is established that when we are at the report stage of a debate it is in order to move a motion covering it and the third reading stage. But we are not at that point. The report stage debate is over.

● (1520)

Mr. MacEachen: You should read the order paper. It says "Resuming consideration of report stage"—order No. 42.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend must not have been here last night either. He says we are resuming consideration. All of us know that that debate ended and no motion at all can revive that debate.

Mr. MacEachen: No. There are three votes to be taken and also concurrence of report stage, and you say it is over?

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Yet the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources proposes in his motion that a day be allotted—he says "not more than one day"—to a stage that cannot be debated at all and can last only a short while.

In reply to your direct question, Mr. Speaker, I do not think my contention rules out the possibility of using Standing Order 75C with respect to third reading, but it does rule out the possibility of using it before third reading is started unless we are still at report stage. That is the gist of rule 75C. As a matter of fact, it is even the gist of the old 1913 rule of closure. You do not close things off before they have even started. There has to have been at least some debate.

In the situation where you have report stage and then third reading, the debate is going on. Although I did not like the position, I accept it as a ruling that when you are at the report stage you can present a motion covering both stages; but the report stage debate is over and I submit, therefore, that at this point one has to act as if only the third reading stage of the debate was left.

So far as third reading stage is concerned, we are governed by the language of the Standing Order which says that a motion can be moved only if it was not possible to reach agreement "in respect of proceedings at the stage at which a public bill was then under consideration." It is on this ground that I feel this motion is contrary to the provisions of the rule and is a flagrant abuse of it.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Before I hear the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker), the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert) and the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Pinard), the thought occurs to me, as I am sure it has to other hon. members, that in the circumstances, since the notice which was given yesterday was in order, since the motion which is put forward today may bring some difficulties with it because it now refers to a stage on which discussion is finished, although votes remain, the notice having to be in the form it was yesterday and the motion having to conform to that notice, and since discussion on that stage of the bill finished last night, the obvious solution would be to require the deletion of those

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

portions of the motion today which relate to a stage that is now finished.

Some hon. Members: No, no.

Mr. Speaker: That is a possible solution that I will have to consider.

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, the rules of the House are there to protect the government once in a while, and quite appropriately so. They are also available to protect members of the House and certainly, although the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) did not raise the matter, the rules ought to be strictly construed.

It is axiomatic that if you agree the rules are here to ensure that the rights of parliament are not trampled upon, then the Chair has to come to grips with the fact that the motion presented today is substantially different from the notice of that motion given yesterday, aside from the foolishness of the motion in the first place, and the absolute foolishness of moving it today in view of what happened in the House leaders' meetings yesterday, on which I cannot elaborate. That is the first point I want to raise.

The second point is that I want to support what was said by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre regarding his interpretation of Standing Order 75C. I agree with the statement made by Your Honour, and agreed to reluctantly by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, regarding the construction to be put upon the ruling you made on another day. At the time at which that notice was given and the motion argued in the course of third reading, I want to emphasize as best I can that the circumstances were so different as to be the difference between night and day. This underscores the foolishness of bringing forward a motion to close yesterday, after notice was given but before the motion could be argued today, one of the stages with respect to which the notice applies having been dealt with by the House. It is finished, by agreement.

Mr. MacEachen: Not at all. We have four votes to call.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): There was agreement, Mr. Speaker, to such an extent that the whip of this party sent notice to all of us that the vote would be deferred until today. That is the position we are in. That matter is concluded.

Surely, sir, when a motion is made in two parts which some would be prepared to construe as being possible under the rule—that is, that a motion can cover two parts—if one part of that motion is a nullity, I argue that the whole motion is a nullity.

I think Your Honour must address yourself to that point as well. There is no half loaf in this matter. Either the motion is valid or it is not. If it is a nullity, then this motion, which was unnecessary in the first place, does not stand before the House and ought to be ruled out of order. That is the third point, Mr. Speaker.