

Motion for Adjournment

today. So as early as Monday, June 26, the house was served with clear notice that it was the intention of the government to bring this part of the session to a close on that day. I pointed out that we would conclude this part of the session today if it were possible to secure royal assent. That is still the intention.

We must keep in mind that the supply bills passed last night have gone to the other place. The other place is meeting at three o'clock and must have an opportunity to deal with those supply bills. As soon as the other place completes its consideration of the supply bills we will be in a position to secure royal assent.

The purpose of the motion, contrary to the misstatement made by the hon. member for Timiskaming, was merely to take into account the fact that no one could foresee when the other place would complete consideration of the supply bills and when it would be possible to obtain royal assent.

Mr. Peters: Mr. Speaker, could I ask the minister a question?

Mr. MacEachen: Yes.

Mr. Peters: I have no disagreement with the second part of the proposition put by the minister, that is, that the house was to stand adjourned until September 25 and so on. This is the normal procedure. However, is it not true that the first part of the motion would not apply and could not apply to any other circumstance than the one facing us at this time? It would not have applied the last time we recessed and even leaving out the date it would not have applied to any other circumstance.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, the work of the session had advanced to the point where it was possible to forecast the circumstances in which royal assent might be forthcoming. If the other place deals with the supply bills royal assent, if it is possible, will be given at 5.15 or 5.30. If the other place continues to discuss the supply bills and that discussion is not completed until later this evening, we will have royal assent at that time or tomorrow, as was indicated on June 26. That is why the motion was phrased in this way. It was in order to take into account the time, possibly prolonged, that might be taken by the other place in dealing with the supply bills.

There is nothing sinister about the motion at all. It is simple. The reason we put this motion on the order paper was so that the house would have an opportunity to deal with

[Mr. MacEachen.]

it in the regular way, because the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre had served notice that he would use every possible method to hold up the adjournment of the house.

If I had come into the house later today and asked for unanimous consent to present an adjournment motion, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre would have been able to veto the desire of most hon. members to adjourn today by withholding unanimous consent. Undoubtedly that is what he would have done.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the minister a question?

Mr. MacEachen: Yes.

Mr. Knowles: Is it not clear, then, that this special, unique motion was drafted in such a way as to prevent me from insisting that the house deal with the matter of increased pensions for retired civil servants?

Mr. MacEachen: No, Mr. Speaker. The purpose of this motion was to give an opportunity to the house to deal with this matter based on an understanding that had been reached by members of the house that we would complete a certain amount of legislative business and the discussion of the main estimates of a certain number of departments. When these estimates had been translated into supply bills it was agreed that we would pass interim supply, after having dealt with so much legislation, and would wind up the session today. That was the understanding.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Speaker, could I ask the minister another question?

Mr. MacEachen: No.

Mr. Knowles: Then I rise on a question of privilege.

Mr. McIlraith: Don't abuse the rules.

Mr. Knowles: My question of privilege is that every time there was any understanding at a meeting of the house leaders about the ending of the session, it was agreed by all of us that we would wind up the business of supply last night. But any understanding about adjourning today was always clearly stated to be without prejudice to my right to insist that we stay to deal with the question of the pensions of retired civil servants.

• (3:00 p.m.)

Mr. MacEachen: The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has of course illustrated the impasse in which he has placed the