

House of Commons Procedures

safeguard, I think it might be cleared up first.

Mr. McIlraith: There is one quite narrow point I should like to raise. The hon. Member says no new order should be dealt with. But the order might be for second reading of a bill; then, subsequently the House might wish to continue with another stage. Or suppose a measure was being considered in committee and it was desired to go on to third reading. Has the hon. gentleman thought about this point? Otherwise, we could agree with the suggested amendment. I did discuss the matter and we had intended to raise it.

Mr. Knowles: I certainly did think about the point which the Minister has raised. I ask him not to press that the amendment go further than I have suggested. I used the word "order" as meaning something listed on the order paper. If an order for second reading had been called prior to ten o'clock, the way this amendment is worded, that could carry on. If an order for consideration in committee of the whole had been called before ten o'clock, having gone into committee of the whole we could carry on. But I do not think it would be a good thing to word this rule in such a way that having finished the Committee stage of a bill we could go on to third reading or go on from second reading to the Committee stage. I think the Government should be taken at its word that it wants this rule in order that we may complete some particular item which had been engaging our attention before ten o'clock. The Minister of Transport made this clear. The President of the Privy Council made it clear, and I hope I have made it clear by this amendment.

Mr. McIlraith: Yes. I think the hon. gentleman misunderstood me. I was trying to question him for clarification. We are quite prepared to accept the amendment.

The Chairman: Order. The Chair would like to put the amendment. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. Members: Dispense.

Mr. Howard: Like my hon. friend from Winnipeg North Centre I am not favourably disposed to the original proposition concerning this Standing Order. Such being the case it seems silly or asinine for me to vote for the amendment now before us. I say this with all respect to the hon. Member for Winnipeg North Centre and to my other colleagues.

[Mr. Knowles.]

I fail to see how we can support a proposal which seeks to amend a bad proposition so as to make it a little more acceptable. We intend to fight against this idea of giving the Government open-ended permission to develop its legislation by means of exhausting Members completely night after night as has been done in the past.

● (4:30 p.m.)

I am not in favour of the amendment or of the original proposal. It may well be that we will have to spend from now until five p.m. tomorrow debating this particular matter, thus denying to Members the opportunity to move amendments to other proposed changes. There is one matter of extreme importance on which I should like to move an amendment later, but if the debate on this point carries on interminably we are quite prepared to accept that.

Because of past experience both with this Government and other governments. I am not in any respect prepared to accept the principle that we should be required to legislate by exhaustion at four o'clock in the morning merely because of the desire of the Government either to rush something through or to cram something down the throats of Members of this House. So far as I am concerned, this proposal is far worse than the so-called guillotine to which the Tories were spuriously objecting a few days ago.

The Chairman: Shall the amendment carry?

Mr. Peters: Mr. Chairman, before you put the question I should like to ask this question. If this amendment is carried, what will it really mean? I know what it says. I know what the contention is. However, if second reading takes place at three o'clock in the morning and there is agreement to proceed with third reading, does the amendment mean that the House does not have control of its own affairs and cannot by unanimous consent proceed with third reading at that time? I doubt that this can be accomplished in this manner. If it cannot be accomplished in this manner, all we are really doing is trying to make acceptable something that obviously is not acceptable to most Members, and they want to provide a safeguard.

I suggest that this highlights one of the problems we are going to have with these rule changes. We are trying to eliminate the opportunity to accomplish something that the majority may wish to do, and I think this type of change should be seriously considered before it is decided upon. By adopting this amendment we can make changes in this