

Business of the House

something entirely different. That is the type of amendment we now have before us.

I have always understood that under those circumstances the house was privileged to consider the motion and the amendment as alternative propositions. Paragraph 338 in Beauchesne's third edition states:

The object of an amendment may be to effect such an alteration in a question as will obtain the support of those who, without such alteration, must either vote against it or abstain from voting thereon, or to present to the house an alternative proposition either wholly or partially opposed to the original question. This may be effected by moving to omit all the words of the question after the first word, "That", and to substitute in their place other words of a different import. In that case the debate that follows is not restricted to the amendment, but includes the motives of the amendment and of the motion, both matters being under the consideration of the house as alternative propositions.

Then I find in Sir Erskine May's Parliamentary Practice, fifteenth edition, at page 398 a paragraph headed "Object of an Amendment and Effect on Debate". The paragraph is as follows:

The object of an amendment may be either to modify a question in such a way as to increase its acceptability, or to present to the house a different proposition as an alternative to the original question.

The latter purpose may be effected by moving to omit all the words of the question after the first word, "that" and to substitute in their place other words of a different import. In that case debate that follows is not restricted to the amendment but includes the purpose both of the amendment and of the motion, both matters being under the consideration of the house as alternative propositions.

My question is this: Is not the motion of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) one proposition which is held before us of a continuous sitting, and the amendment which has been presented an alternative proposition of a sitting up to midnight of this day? Consequently in debate, in order to show the reasons in favour of adopting the amendment, it is essential to point out the weaknesses of the original motion and the strength of the amendment. Alternatively a person supporting the motion would wish to show the strength of that motion and the weaknesses of the amendment. There you have alternative propositions for the consideration of the house. Restricting the debate solely to the amendment seems to me to limit debate on the matter, because it is difficult to advance all the reasons in favour of the amendment without at the same time pointing out the way in which the amendment is superior to the main motion. I ask this question in order that the debate may proceed in an orderly fashion. For my own guidance I should like your comment, because if I am permitted to discuss the points that have been raised on the main motion and point out that the alternative amendment is a better proposition, then I

[Mr. Churchill.]

should like to comment on some remarks that were made by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). May I have your comments, sir, before proceeding?

Mr. Speaker: The question the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill) has raised is quite important. As I said during the debate, it is very difficult to debate the amendment without some reference to the main motion. Those may not have been my words but that is the import of what I said. During the debate the hon. member for Montmagny-L'Islet (Mr. Lesage) called my attention to the fact that hon. members were debating the main motion. At that time I pointed out it was not proper to debate the main motion. I have not objected to a reference to the main motion, but so often during the course of this debate hon. members have forgotten the amendment and have been debating the main motion. The main motion was debated at some length before the amendments were moved, and hon. members in debating the amendments were setting forth reasons not why the amendments should be carried but why the main motion should not be carried.

Hon. members should address themselves at this time to the amendment under consideration. I will not object to a reference to the main motion in order to establish why the amendment should be carried. The house must not lose sight of the fact that at the present time it is the amendment which the house must consider accepting or rejecting, not the main motion.

Mr. Churchill: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I suggest that the amendment putting forward the proposition that the sitting should be extended two hours tonight is the course that should be followed by the house. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, whose name will be forever linked with the course of this debate today, suggested that if we sat during part of the night we might perchance finish our work without too much delay. In other words, I gained the impression that he meant that perhaps if we continued from ten until two or from ten until four we might find we had completed the work on the order paper. I suggest that to sit from ten to twelve tonight plus the normal sitting hours tomorrow would accomplish the same purpose in a much more orderly fashion. That is why the amendment has been put forward and supported by so many members on this side. We are anxious to deal with the items on the order paper after at least a certain amount of rest during the night, and we are quite content to add two hours to the deliberations today.