

Honour makes reference to it from time to time, so it has that sanctification. According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary the definition of the word "adjourned" includes "break-off for later resumption", and the word "interrupt", "break in upon a process, speech, person speaking, etc." I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that those words must be taken as having virtually the same meaning. I think that makes sense.

When we brought in Standing Order 45(2) there was no intention of other than limiting the right of members of this House engaging in a debate to concur in a committee report, and under S.O. 43 no intention to have a debate lasting more than one day. The government always had the right—and it should have, and I agree that was proper—at the end of a day to adjourn debate, and the motion did not come back. They could make a formal motion to adjourn, if they had the courage to do that.

The government always has the right to make a formal motion to adjourn, and when that happens it is an adjournment within the meaning of Standing Order 45(2). That is up to the government. That is their privilege. But I submit to Your Honour, and I am very sincere in this, there is such a limit on the opportunities for private members in this House, particularly on the opposition side, that I think it would—the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. MacEachen) smiles. He has been one of the foremost movers in attempts to curtail the rights of members of this House. Ever since I have known him as House leader he has never lost an opportunity to cut down the rights of hon. members on this side. He has been very successful in it.

Mr. MacEachen: Not very.

An hon. Member: Machiavellian.

Mr. Baldwin: I will not go into that now; we are in trouble already. I suggest that this was the intent of members of the committee in making their recommendation, and the intent of the House in accepting it. Surely it was to put these two rules together and say: there shall be a limit of a day, but in using fixed times for the question period common sense would enter the picture and the words "adjourned or interrupted" would mean that when you broke into the debate at that time, then at three o'clock or whenever the question period was over, we would resume this particular debate.

I think that is the only way there can be a sensible and logical interpretation. I am sure the leader of the House for the government might come along and say. "Maybe we ought to look at this rule to see how it is applied and what we can do, with due right to preserve opportunity for the private members of this House to engage in debates and discussions sometimes." I know the government suffers very greatly from the deprivations of the rules in these very sad circumstances. But I suggest any other interpretation would do violence to the intent of the committee, to the intent of the House, and to the situation which arose today when a member of the government properly initiated a debate and, having done that, the debate will never be brought back.

Point of Order—Mr. Hnatyshyn

The very fact that the wording of Standing Order 43 refers to urgent and pressing circumstances must surely impress itself upon Your Honour as indicating that the intent should be that Your Honour should be vigilant and ingenious—and I am sure Your Honour can be very ingenious—to find ways to enable this debate to continue. You can do so under the circumstances I mentioned, without violating the rules.

● (1552)

Mr. Leonard C. Jones (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, my remarks will be very brief. It seems to me that there has been a lot of razzmatazz and procedural jargon heard here this afternoon which could be cleared up by a sensible agreement among all concerned in the House. Surely we have many things to consider, and the suggestion made by the hon. member from Edmonton was a fair one. The principles can be laid down in our standing orders. We have all read them and we should know them, but I suggest to you, sir, that the primary principle in parliamentary procedures must be the principle of common sense, natural justice, fairness and equity.

Here is a motion which has been put to the House by unanimous consent. Even the mover of the motion was cut off from making a statement. A minister of the Crown rose and talked out the motion. I thought that could only be done on a private member's bill and on matters of that nature. Surely the motion was brought before the House by unanimous consent and, I understand, there was agreement that there would be no debate and the motion would be unanimously agreed to by the House. So I am most surprised that members of the House, and particularly ministers of the Crown, would back off from an agreement made with members of various parties.

I think the government owes it to us to sit down, discuss this matter, and iron it out. Let the mover of the motion at least be given an opportunity to say a few words—I am sure he must have a few words. It seems to me that natural justice demands that the mover of the motion be allowed to speak up and say a few words, in view of the fact that a minister of the Crown was given that opportunity. Mr. Speaker, I suggest that we stop the razzmatazz and agree to have this motion heard, and get it over with once and for all.

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak briefly on this matter. I think the points were well put by members on this side, but there is an essential point which needs to be made. There are the rules, which are very important to the effective operation of this House, and there are also the practices. I think the practices are quite clear, Your Honour, that usually motions under Standing Order 43 are opportunities for private members to bring motions before the House, usually to raise issues which are rarely voted on and even more rarely debated.

In this particular instance a motion was presented later than normal because of the introduction of a new member. It was presented with the understanding—certainly on this side of the House and we understood that such was the understanding on the other side of the House—that it would be accepted, because it referred to a specific event today, and passed