

having given the notice at a time when the stage was in existence, is to at least put the motion forward in the form which conforms to the notice.

I would also like the hon. member to address the second point, which is this. The language of Standing Order 75c says particularly:

—an allocation may be proposed in one motion to cover the proceedings at both the report and the third reading stages on a bill—

Obviously, the only time that that can be done is at the report stage, because if it is done at the third reading stage, the report stage is already finished. Since two stages can be included in one motion, and those two stages are the report stage and the third reading stage, I would like the hon. member to discuss how else that could be done in terms of that language than on a motion of the kind that is in front of me now.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the situation has changed since yesterday. Yesterday we were still debating the report stage and, therefore, it was possible for that debate to be carried on or for an attempt to be made to cut off that debate. But that debate is now over and you, sir, have admitted that that part of the motion proposed by the minister is redundant, a nullity and out of order. The only portion of the motion that can be considered now is the portion which relates to third reading.

I do not see how the notice of yesterday, which is now in a different situation and therefore has in it something that has gone by the board, can apply to today's situation. Today we are at the point where third reading is about to begin. It is not possible for the minister to say that agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 75A or 75B at the stage at which a public bill was then under consideration. It has as yet not been under consideration at all. I do not see how the minister can rely on the fact that yesterday we were still at the report stage to claim the right to present a motion covering two stages.

As for the right set out in the Standing Order—and we had this raised on a point of order in another instance this session—to move a motion covering two stages of debate, there are not now two stages of debate. The report stage of the debate is over and we are about to begin the third reading stage. I submit that the attempt to do that goes beyond the provisions of Standing Order 75c. If the minister had given notice the day before and sought to move that motion yesterday, or if the report stage had not been completed last night, I would have to agree that the motion is in order. However, we are in a new situation. We are at the point where the only debate left is the third reading debate. It has not proceeded, and I submit on that basis the motion falls.

If you, Mr. Speaker, find it in order—and frankly I do not see how you can, sir, because I think that there is a clear case for our side—the question will also arise—and I think that we should know before we get into what is involved—as to what is a sitting day. That phrase “a sitting day” occurs in a number of places in this Standing Order. It has been determined on a

Time Allocation

number of occasions that a sitting day for a government item consists of the day from the moment orders of the day are called, and it has to be all of that day to meet the definition of “a sitting day”. Today, however, when orders of the day are called there will be three recorded votes on the report stage amendments, so it will be an hour later before we start the debate at third reading. I would say, therefore, Mr. Speaker, that a sitting day will have to be decided by you if it works out that way.

There is also the little problem of what we do about moving from report stage to third reading stage, since it requires unanimous consent on a day on which a vote has been taken; but here I am probably getting into the stupidity of the proposal rather than the fact that it is out of order. It seems to me, apart from the fact that the whole matter would have gotten through more quickly if the whole motion had not been proposed at all, that the motion is a flagrant abuse of Standing Order 75c, that the minister is trying to move under 75c a closure motion on third reading stage before debate has started, when the Standing Order says very clearly that it has to relate to the impossibility of achieving agreement with respect to proceedings at the stage at which a public bill was then under consideration. We have not reached that stage yet, so I contend that the minister has no right to present this motion at this time.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. With respect, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre—and I will hear other hon. members—has not dealt with the matter that is so central to the argument. The Standing Order says that the report stage and the third reading stage can be contained in one motion.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): But the report stage is over.

Mr. Speaker: The second point which the hon. member was arguing, if I understand him correctly, is that a motion cannot be put before the House dealing with a stage that has not yet begun and is not under consideration at the time. If I were to accept that argument then, in fact, we could never entertain a motion which dealt with both report stage and third reading. Obviously, the only time that that application can be made is when we are at report stage which, and in and of itself, says that we have not begun third reading yet.

Since the language of the Standing Order says that those two stages can be part of one motion, if I were to accept the hon. member's argument, I would have to accept that we cannot implement that paragraph of the order. As the hon. member knows, we implemented that paragraph just recently to cover both the report stage and third reading of a bill.

I would like the hon. member to deal with these points before I give the floor to the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker).

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, you are quite right that not long ago on another bill a motion was made when we were still at the report stage to cover both the remainder of the report stage and third reading. It is also quite