

## AFTER RECESS

The house resumed at 8 p.m.

**Mr. R. N. Thompson (Red Deer):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the good will evident in the house at this moment. I have a few minutes left. Your Honour will recall that last Tuesday evening I mentioned that you might have an increasingly difficult time in controlling this house in future because of the breakdown in rapport and confidence between the two sides of the house which has been brought on by the government's closure action and because of the Prime Minister's negative attitude and disdain for the house. Little did I think that today, less than 48 hours later, I should see a minister of the Crown, the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. MacEachen), actually call Your Honour's actions in question and thus challenge your office.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Thompson:** He not only questioned your judgment, Mr. Speaker, but he had the audacity to imply that Your Honour actually went beyond your authority in allowing the motion of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles).

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. If the hon. member had been here at six o'clock he would recall my suggestion that this debate should be conducted in a way that will keep the Chair out of it.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Speaker:** Perhaps the hon. member might keep that in mind.

**An hon. Member:** Rewrite your speech now.

**Mr. Thompson:** I respect your position, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, it was not a pleasant experience this afternoon for one who listened to the minister and realized what was taking place.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Thompson:** I emphasize again, Mr. Speaker, that I am concerned about what is taking place in parliament as the result of the government's unilateral and arbitrary decision to limit the length of debate at its own will. Again, I emphasize that parliament cannot be subservient to government, no matter what party forms the government. That is where hon. members opposite have gone off

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the track. Rules governing this parliament are not the prerogative of the government. They are the responsibility of parliament itself. The rules of this House of Commons belong to this House of Commons and the government uses these rules to obtain the consent of the house for the legislation it wishes to introduce. If the rules are to be satisfactory, and be of general benefit, they must be arrived at as a result of consensus. We must all consent to them, especially if parliament is to remain the voice of the people and free.

By utilizing these rules the government is able to function and carry out its specific responsibilities. I only wish that the Prime Minister and hon. members opposite had this thought more clearly in focus. The house leader and others on the government side say that because their party forms the government, they must control the house. They say that they have the majority in this house. The government may have the majority of seats in this house but it does not represent the majority of electors in this country. It represents about 45 per cent of our people and those who sit on the opposition side collectively represent about 55 per cent. That shows why the rules of the house must be arrived at as a result of agreement in the house, because we must safeguard not only the minority but also the majority.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Thompson:** I do not think that the majority of government supporters are behind this measure, Mr. Speaker. In today's Toronto *Telegram* I read that Ontario Liberals have protested against the government's closure. The article reads in part—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired unless he has the unanimous consent of the house to continue.

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. Members:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I gather from the negative response in the house that we shall be deprived of the pleasure of hearing the rest of the hon. member's speech.

**Mr. Thompson:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, you will no doubt recall that it was agreed last Tuesday that I be given an extra few minutes to make up for the constant interruptions from the government side. I wonder if I might have those few minutes to enable me to finish my remarks?