



Fourth Session — Thirty-First Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
STANDING COMMITTEE
on
RULES OF THE HOUSE

29 Elizabeth II

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Harry E. Graham
Speaker*



2:00 p.m., THURSDAY, 7 FEBRUARY, 1980.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE RULES OF THE HOUSE
Thursday, 7 February, 1980**

Time: 2:00 p.m.

CHAIRMAN: Hon. Harry E. Graham (Birtle-Russell):

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Shall we call the meeting to order. One of the first items that I have before me is a letter dated January 18th, and the contents are: "I will be out of the country when the Rules Committee meets on February 7th. Would you please accept my resignation from the committee for that particular meeting. Signed Abe Kohnats, MLA for Radisson." So there is a vacancy on the committee. Mr. McGill.

HON. EDWARD MCGILL (Brandon West):

Mr. Chairman, there may be some question about the wording of that resignation, but I would move that we accept Mr. Kohnats' resignation from the committee and that Mr. Mercier be nominated to replace him.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Is there a seconder for that motion? Is that agreeable with the members of the committee? Well then, we'll . . .

HON. WARNER H. JORGENSON (Morris):

I think it should be understood that Mr. Kohnats' resignation from the committee cannot be for one meeting. He is resigned from the committee effectively.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Attorney-General.

HON. GERALD W.J. MERCIER, Q.C. (Osborne):

Mr. Chairman, if I just might comment. Just further to Mr. Jorgenson's remarks, it would be the intention to replace Mr. Kohnats on the committee after the session resumes, to re-appoint him after the session resumes.

MR. JORGENSON:

Well, when the session resumes then it's no problem.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

There are two matters which have been brought to my attention — one of which is the result of a resolution adopted by the House, and the other arises from the perusal of the new Beauchesne by our Clerk — and I would suggest that perhaps we should deal with these matters first. The first one is the matter of the inclusion of the Lord's Prayer in routine proceedings.

On March 26, 1979, Mr. Malinowski, the Member for Port Douglas, introduced a Private Member's Resolution asking that Rule 18 of the Rules of the House be amended by inserting the words "including the Lord's Prayer" following the word "prayers" in the first line thereof.

An amendment proposed by Mr. Brown, the Honourable Member for Rhineland, referred the matter of the inclusion of the Lord's Prayer in the daily routine proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba to the Standing Committee on the Rules of the House for consideration, and that amendment was adopted by the House. So that is a matter that is now before this committee.

The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. SIDNEY GREEN, Q.C. (Inkster):

Mr. Chairman, I would like to speak to this matter because I did speak to it when the matter was referred and indicated that there had been what I would consider progress -- and I'm trying to be as unprovocative as possible — in removing any kind of orientation towards prayers, and we sort of compromised on a prayer which is acceptable to all of the members, even though different people may have different ideas about it.

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I would object strongly to having a prayer which is oriented any closer to any particular religious denomination — and I think that Mr. Malinowski used the argument that we are majority, words to that effect, which I am not going to belabour here because I don't think that it would be a matter which would receive much attention.

At the time I indicated that I was opposed to that kind of orientation, that I preferred an orientation which is completely directed towards each of the members. There can be no more personal thing than prayer, even as within one denomination. And that a suggestion, although I am willing to sort of live with the status quo if I wanted to make a move I would move towards greater liberty of conscience than less, which I consider the proposal of the Member for Burrows, that the greatest liberty of conscience is that if we each prayed in our own way. That could be very well established and Father Malinowski can say the Lord's Prayer and somebody else could say whatever he likes by one moment of silence or one moment of silent prayer, if you want to call it, thirty seconds of silent prayer, a minute of silent prayer. I really don't care about the time because I think that if you want to calculate the time for the benefit of one particular member or maybe more than one, of how long it will take to say the Lord's Prayer silently, that would be suitable to me, and I believe would be a movement in a more positive direction.

I believe that the fixing on any particular prayer is a less positive direction. The status quo is acceptable merely because it works and if there was to be a great controversy I would settle with the status quo.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Any further discussion? The Honourable Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. JORGENSON:

I perhaps shouldn't even comment on it because I agree with the Member for Inkster.

When this matter was first debated in this Rules Committee some years ago we spent some time attempting to revise the prayer that had been in use for a number of years in order to make it acceptable to every one. I think we achieved that and I think we succeeded in having a prayer that everybody seems to accept and I would be reluctant to want to change that. I would think my preference would be to leave it just as it is.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

MR. PETER FOX (Kildonan):

Mr. Chairman, I would just like to indicate to the Committee that I am in concurrence with what the two previous speakers have said and I would like to also, for the information of those who were not aware of it, indicate that at that time, as Chairman of this particular Committee, I wrote to a number of synods and various councils around the Province of Manitoba, and the total indication at that time was there wasn't a dissenting voice of any kind, they said they were happy with what . . . well, they weren't happy, but they were agreeable to what we had and they had no intention of offering any changes. Now possibly at that time the ecumenical spirit was greater than it is now, I am not certain. But, at least nobody wanted to open up the particular subject in respect to a special prayer for the House, they were satisfied with what we had.

And, I believe, Mr. Speaker, you probably have those letters on file. If someone wants the information it's there, and so I think that that kind of indicates that this area has been explored and we've covered the ground already to a great extent.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Having heard no further discussion, and in the lack of any resolution, we will leave the matter as it is then.

MR. BLAKE:

I believe we have dealt with it and the Prayer will remain as it is.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Very good. The next matter is one that has been brought to our attention by the Clerk and it is dealing with the authority that we have for a matter of grievance in the Chamber. Perhaps it is best that I read the way in which the Clerk has put it on paper.

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At one time the House of Commons in Ottawa conducted its Estimates Review much in the same manner as followed in the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba: that is, a Motion for Mr. Speaker to leave the Chair for the Committee of Supply was passed, although only on designated days. On these days it was permissible for a member to discuss any public matter within the powers of the Federal Parliament, or to ask for the redress of any grievance.

Citation 234 of Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, the Fourth Edition (1958), Pages 198 and 199, laid down the guidelines to be followed in such cases. With the changes in procedure adopted in the Federal House the Estimates are now referred to Standing Committees on or before March 1st of the then expiring year. The Motion for Mr. Speaker to leave the Chair for Supply is not now used, and consequently the Matter of Grievance, as it was previously known, no longer exists. No reference is made and no procedure set down to govern the grievance procedure in the Fifth Edition of Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms.

In the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba we have relied on the provisions of Citation 234 of Beauchesne's Fourth Edition to govern our grievance procedure since our own rules are silent on this matter. Since the grievance procedure has been removed from the current edition of Beauchesne the question now arises as to what authority do we have for the standing practice of a member rising to air a grievance on the Motion for Supply.

The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN:

Well, Mr. Chairman, with all due respect to the Clerk, and I think we should thank him for bringing this to our attention, I don't think that there is any change in the Manitoba House, the fact that Beauchesne has a different statement in it now. Beauchesne governs us as a matter of precedence and we look to Beauchesne, and the precedence which is there is still there; the only thing that is changed is that the House of Commons doesn't operate that way any more. And if one was challenging what we now do he would say the House of Commons doesn't do that any more and the Speaker would, if I would gauge a reasonable Speaker correctly, would say, yes. But we are not governed by present Beauchesne, we are governed by the practices and procedures which were in existence when the House of Commons had a Motion to go into Supply, and I, therefore, rule that the Motion for Grievance is permitted, and if you'll take that down, when the time comes you can repeat it back.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

MR. PETER FOX (Kildonan):

Mr. Chairman, I would just like to add to that that if we have any difficulty and we can't find Beauchesne's Fourth Edition for when we do go into grievances, maybe it would be a simple matter to take that particular procedure and put it into our own rules. We may even be able to improve on it because sometimes in the Fourth Edition there were ambiguities in respect to what Beauchesne said you could or couldn't do. But personally I prefer a much more elastic form of procedure and I would concur with the Member for Inkster that we have set our precedents, we have had our particular practices and that hasn't changed so we just govern ourselves by that and if we do have to refer in respect to what we do in Grievance we go to the Fourth Edition or else we write it into our own rules.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Attorney-General.

MR. MERCIER:

Mr. Chairman, I agree that the present procedure is the one that should be continued to be followed, and assuming that we are all in agreement with that what we perhaps might consider is requesting legislative counsel to draft a rule that the committee might consider at the next meeting and determine whether or not they want to incorporate it into the written Rules of the Legislature.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Member for Inkster.

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MR. GREEN:

Mr. Chairman, I have a problem with writing things now. I know what the rule is now but when you write it somebody some day five years from now is going to say a change was made, in 1980 they enacted this rule. It seems to me that the status quo should govern and there is absolutely no question that we would be governed not by the present edition of Beauchesne, and I feel quite confident about that, that there is no need for drafting a rule because the draftsman has one thing in mind and somebody interprets it later as meaning something else. What we know now is that I can get up on a motion to go into Supply and air a grievance and nothing you can put into a rule will improve on that, as far as I'm concerned, because I have that right now.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Attorney-General

MR. MERCIER:

Mr. Chairman, I don't want to be too technical but the rule that we have in our rules says that in all cases for which provision is not made in the rules, or by sessional or other Orders, the usages and customs of the House of Commons of Canada as in force at the time shall be followed. So if in fact the House of Commons is now governed by Beauchesne's Fifth Edition then the House of Commons is not governed by Beauchesne's Fourth Edition which is the grievance procedure which we wish to follow in our rules in the Legislature. We're agreed -- there's no disagreement that that's the rule and the procedure we want to follow. So I would suggest that there may be some gray area by the wording in the present rule that says "as in force at the time." If we want to continue the grievance procedure we're agreed upon then it might be worthwhile to consider a draft rule change at the next meeting of the Rules Committee and see if it incorporates the procedure that we all want to see followed.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

MR. FOX:

Mr. Chairman, again I would like to say that I believe in flexibility but if the Attorney-General had finished reading that particular passage in respect to usage and customs of the House of Commons, "as in force at the time, shall be followed so far as they are applicable to the Assembly." Well the Assembly hasn't changed and we are not with Beauchesne's Fifth in that particular area so we use our own usages and customs to that degree.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Any further discussion?

MR. FOX:

Mind you I'm not going to be adamant either way. If the majority wish to have a new rule that's fine, but I think as I say you have more flexibility if you don't write too much down.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN:

I wonder if legislative counsel sees any problem in us just continuing as we are, without writing anything.

MR. RAE TALLIN:

Yes. The problem is really on the motion to go into Supply which is no longer part of the rules of the House of Commons.

MR. GREEN:

But the Member for Kildonan just indicated that the rule says "as they are applicable . . .

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MR. TALLIN:

"So far as they are applicable to the Assembly" I think means that you don't follow the rules and go back to a part of the rules that are for a bicameral system. You follow the rules insofar as they would apply to the House of Commons. But I'm just wondering where you get authority for a motion to go into Supply

MR. GREEN:

You can find that that is the way we do it, it's the precedents in the House, common law so to speak.

MR. TALLIN:

But that's not what you're using. The rule doesn't say you follow the practices of the House, it says "in cases not covered by the rules or by a sessional or other Order," and there is no sessional or other Order, "the usages and customs of the House of Commons of Canada", not the usages and practices of this session.

MR. JORGENSON:

There obviously is no disagreement with respect to the use of the motion itself, I think all sides of the House want to continue with a grievance motion. I'm a little bit concerned that somewhere down the road, it may not be us in this Chamber, will look at the rules and see that there is no provision for that grievance motion and then it will be curtailed.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN:

Well, Mr. Chairman, then what if we inserted in that particular paragraph the Rules and Procedures of the House of Commons as they existed as at the date of the enactment of these rules because there is all kinds of changes in the House of Commons now and we can take committees out of the House, I mean it just doesn't make any sense. Sometimes the law has to conform to common sense and somebody will say so. But if we took that particular paragraph, what is the date of the enactment of those rules?

MR. TALLIN:

(Inaudible)

MR. GREEN:

Well I'd like to go back further because we've been . . .

MR. CLERK:

You're talking about Beauchesne?

MR. TALLIN:

'72 I think was the last time they adopted in total.

MR. GREEN:

You see I don't know what the rules were in the House of Commons in 1972 . . .

MR. JACK REEVES:

Let's be safe and go back to 1954, the date of Beauchesne.

MR. JORGENSON:

The rules actually were changed I believe in 1968 or 1969, I'm not sure, shortly after the Trudeau administration came in.

MR. GREEN:

That's right.

MR. JORGENSON:

But Beauchesne's, the new Beauchesne's was not printed until last year. So that provision that you had in the old Beauchesne is no longer contained in the new book and that's where

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the difficulty is, and it's the new Beauchesne's Fifth Edition that we're supposed to be following now.

MR. GREEN:

Yes, but it's not merely the grievance motion that is the problem on that basis, there are all kinds of rules of the House of Commons which deal with matters which possibly we do not deal with and rather than write an entire new rule book which I think would be horrendous, I think that we should be governed by our practices and if the legislative counsel can take that particular rule and say that we are governed by our practices and the practices of the House of Commons, as confirmed by the precedents of this House, shall apply, then we're not worried about the House of Commons rules in Ottawa and I wonder if we can just ask him to do that.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable House Leader.

MR. JORGENSON:

I don't think that there's going to be any great debate on it one way or the other. Whatever I think legislative counsel may feel is necessary to ensure that we are not violating a rule or following a rule that does not exist is satisfactory with me. May I suggest that we ask him to draft something that could be applicable and deal with it at a later date.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Minister without Portfolio.

MR. McGILL:

Mr. Chairman, the arguments that are put forward to remain silent in our Rule Book with respect to the grievance motion and rely upon usage and custom in the House seems to me is acceptable but it has the weakness that it gives rather an advantage to senior members who know the usages and customs of the House. What about new members who take their seat and wish to be knowledgeable on what they can do and what they can't do in the House, how will they discover these things unless it is somehow set out for them. I think we need to consider the new members as well as those of us who have been here long enough to know what we can do and what we can't do by reason of custom.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Gentlemen I believe it is quite clear from the discussion so far that there is absolutely no desire whatsoever to get rid of the grievance, in fact all we're dealing with is finding some way of making it clear to anyone studying the rules how a grievance motion is proceeded with in the Legislative Assembly. Is that agreed? Then perhaps our legal counsel can take the matter under consideration and come up at a later date with some proposals.

Those are the two matters that I have before me at the present time. I believe the Honourable Attorney-General wished to raise a matter.

MR. MERCIER:

Yes, Mr. Chairman, if I could perhaps distribute two draft rule changes. We could follow the procedure perhaps of discussing them first of all and obtaining the views of the committee before any effort is made to deal with them formally.

The first is a proposed amendment to the rules of the House which would deal with the sittings and hours of the Legislature. I might say by way of background that I have reviewed the hours of sittings in other provinces and for the information of the committee, for example in New Brunswick they do not sit on Mondays; in the Province of Quebec the Legislature meets only three days per week, Monday is set aside for constituency work and Friday morning committees meet; in the Province of Ontario Wednesday is reserved for committees; in Alberta they very rarely sit in the evenings, in fact I'm advised that in this past fall they only sat twice in the evenings.

The proposed rule change with respect to the hours of the Legislature would add an additional half hour on Monday by beginning the sitting at 2:00 rather than 2:30; would add two and a half hours on Tuesday by sitting from 10:00 to 12:00 in the morning and sitting at 2:00 in the afternoon rather than 2:30; Wednesday would add one-half hour by sitting at 2:00 instead of 2:30; Thursday would be the same, but the hours would be changed to sit from 10:00

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to 12:00 in the morning and 2:00 to 5:30 in the afternoon. There would be an option to continue Committee of the Supply on Thursday evenings and, of course, we spend most of the time of the Legislature in Committee of Supply. Of course, during Speedup we would sit Thursday evenings and Fridays. It would be proposed to not have formal sittings of the Legislature on Fridays except during Speedup and when Monday is a holiday.

I would suggest that these hours could be tried on a trial basis. In fact I would suggest there would not be less hours, but there may in fact be more working hours but that the time would be better distributed and would allow for committee meetings perhaps on Thursday evenings, certainly on Fridays.

On Fridays for those members who did not sit on the committee that was sitting or if there were no committee meetings it would give greater time, particularly for members who have to travel to the city, for constituency matters.

It also gives from time to time an opportunity for Cabinet to have an opportunity for a full day's deliberations, and I am sure members from both sides will recognize the difficulties that Cabinet has in meeting while the Legislature is in session.

The second proposed amendment deals basically with a change in Committee of Supply to deal with Minister's salary first. The rule change in 65(15) and 65(16) is just a reordering of those two matters which presently are in the Rules, but 65(16.1) provides for consideration of the Minister's salary first. I think this really would accommodate the wishes of the Opposition. In my brief time as a member in the Legislature it has seemed to me that during Estimates, the Minister's Salary has been skipped and then we turn to Administration and a great deal of debate goes on in the Administration of a department — sometimes I must admit at the instigation of the individual Minister, who sometimes provokes a great deal of debate on that item. Then it goes on into debate and repetition during individual items and then sometimes for a third time the matter is debated at the end of the Minister's Salary. The proposal here is to debate Minister's Salary first and deal with it at that time and then move on, for information purposes, to any particular item that members may have specific questions on.

I might say in addition, there certainly has been an attempt in the past for Ministers to provide information at the beginning of their Estimates, but I am attempting to obtain the concurrence of the Ministers to provide as much detailed information prior to the consideration of their Estimates so that that information is available and a great deal of time doesn't have to be spent on asking how many staff man years are in this area and how does that compare with last year, etc. I think that kind of detailed information can be prepared quite easily by each department and provided prior to the Estimates to avoid a lot of unnecessary questioning so that members can debate the real issues.

So, Mr. Chairman, I offer these two proposals perhaps for some discussion now. I should point out firstly, in the one amendment to the Rules of the House related to hours -- in Rule 2(2), that should read, ". . . the House shall meet on the Friday preceding that Monday."

MR. GREEN:

No. 2?

MR. MERCIER:

Yes, in 2(2), "on the Friday preceding that Monday." And then in 3(2) in the second line "say", of course, should be "day". One other small -- at the very end in 65(8.1) that, of course, should be "Committee of Supply on Thursday" not Wednesday evening.

A MEMBER:

What was that last one?

MR. MERCIER:

On the last page, the last paragraph, "Committee of Supply on Wednesday evening", of course, should be "Thursday evening".

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Gentlemen, you have had two proposals raised by the Honourable Attorney-General, do you wish to deal with them separately or together?

MR. MERCIER:

Probably separately.

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MR. CHAIRMAN:

Is it agreed we deal with them separately? (Agreed)

Then the first issue that was raised was the one dealing with the hours of sitting. It is now open for discussion.

The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

MR. FOX:

Mr. Chairman, I concur with the Attorney-General that some of the other provinces have apparently less hours sitting per week, but it has to be borne in mind that almost all of the other provinces except Manitoba sit during the Spring and Fall and our suggestion would be that if we were going to have a look at changing the hours of sitting, we should first of all look at reallocating our workload to a two-session sitting of the House without proroguing, and if that is feasible and is desirable then we would be prepared to maybe have another look at changing the present hours of sitting.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN:

Well, Mr. Chairman, I am certainly amenable to any kind of a discussion, but if we did have a two-session sitting, in other words, the Fall and the Winter, we would still have to know what it is going to look like and I think that we should have some discussion because in my view this kind of proposal cannot be implemented without concurrence on all sides of the House. It is possible to have a vote on it and have it through here and then you have got to have a debate on it in the Legislature. Preferably if some situation can be arrived at which everybody is willing to give a try, then it has a chance of getting through, and that is the way we have been able to work in the past.

So I am sort of inviting, if there is any discussion on it, or I mean if there is no discussion on this issue of whether the present hours, if we sat this one Session or if we sat next year, we didn't have two Sessions, then is the position from all members that we sit in exactly the same way as we are sitting now.

I wish to make it plain, Mr. Chairman, so that there is no misunderstanding, that I will vote — if it ever came to a vote — I would vote for what the opposition wants to have, even if it is not entirely in accordance with what I think. I think it would be unwise to push through something in the opposition; but is there any discussion that the members wish to have regarding what we are doing if we don't have two sittings. If we don't have two sittings, then is the suggestion that we do exactly as we are doing now or is there any way of improving it?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Attorney-General.

MR. MERCIER:

Well, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the two-sitting proposal, I think we would find on both sides of the Legislature a great deal of sympathy towards sitting Spring and Fall, or Fall and Spring, however that may be. I would personally think it is not too far off before that idea will be accepted. But I would be interested in knowing what would be the objections to this proposal. One, I suppose, that if you compare what's in the Rules with what's proposed here is that you would lose a Private Members' Hour. But again, in my brief two years here we have never used Private Members' Hour on Friday ever, that I can recall. So I don't find that a particular objection.

I've heard some discussion that perhaps there's some concern about committees. I think that what in fact this does is provide a much better system of scheduling committee meetings. For example, allowing those members who surely would be notified at the beginning of the week that a committee was going to meet on Friday, if they were on the committee they could plan on being there, if they were not on that particular committee that was meeting they could plan on doing constituency work. I think it allows for a much better use of member's time to accept changes in these rules, Mr. Chairman. So I would be very much interested in knowing what the specific objections were to these proposed rules.

Again I would reiterate my suggestion is that we try them out for a trial period and we just might find, either at the end of the session or perhaps even midway through the session,

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that it's not what we all as legislators want to follow. I can assure all members that we would be very open on that, but I think there is room for some improvement in what we have now and I think this would provide for some improvement.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

MR. FOX:

Well, Mr. Chairman, nothing is perfect and it is true that we may be able to improve things, but at the present time, under the proposal of the Attorney-General, it seems as though the opposition is losing 90 minutes. We are losing one question period, we are also losing the Private Members' Hour. It may be that it hasn't been utilized as it should have but it was at the option of the opposition to use it or not to use it. If you change the rules then there is no option any more, it's gone. And the same thing as I said in respect to the question period, it takes one particular day out of the question period which we no longer have. Now possibly we could come to some conclusion in respect to adding another question period on the days when we sit twice, but I am not certain we could incorporate that without having to start the House all over again, unless we have a particular special rule written in to indicate that there would be two question periods in one day. So you arrive at some difficulty there.

But the other objection, which is prevalent for the opposition, is the fact that we go into speedup quite often fairly early and we are sitting three times a day and it is simply to try and get done before the end of June or the middle of June or something to that nature. And since we have that kind of work that we have to have the speedup, then wouldn't it be much more logical to split our workload, re-allocate it and do it twice a year and then have a look at the hours of sitting to see whether we can't improve on them then.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Member for Minnedosa.

MR. BLAKE:

Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm pretty flexible on the matter of changing the hours, and as a rural member I know that it would facilitate the work of the rural members to get back to their constituency on a Thursday evening rather than a Friday, where you get sometimes bogged down on weekends with calls and what not when you maybe should be spending some time at home or with your family. But as the Attorney-General mentioned, it is possible that we could do this on a trial basis, and I don't know whether I will not see this carved in stone either. I think maybe if we tried it for a session and if it is not working the opposition can say, "Look we're losing our question period, we're losing our Private Members' Hour, it's not really what we want, let's go back and hash it over." I have been on both sides, have seen question periods as we all know, whether we like to admit it or not, wasted day after day after day. You go through the 40 minutes but you really don't gain anything. It's a procedure that we go through and in opposition naturally you're not going to want to give it up.

But I think there's something here we can be flexible on. I fully believe — we'll be criticized I know if we say we're going to cease sittings on Thursday and we're going to go back to our constituencies, and they're going to say, well we want to lessen our workload and the same take-home pay and that whole argument is going to come up. But I can't help but think that it would be a good idea to try it to see if it is going to benefit us. If it's not going to benefit us let's get back down and discuss it and say, "All right, this hasn't worked, that has worked," and merge into a concensus and say, "All right this is how we are going to have it from now on".

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN:

Mr. Chairman, I think that there are certain problems associated with any change and I always felt that I'd like to look at change from the point of view of how they effect me if I was in opposition, or how they effect me if I was in government. And I think that all of the points raised are reasonable points and sometimes when you are trying to make a change it is possible that it can be done if you alleviate the fears by sliding into it, if it's good, rather than not. And this suggestion that there be a trial is one way of doing it and I am going to try

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to see whether there isn't something else that can be done which would commend itself to see whether we can deal with the fears.

One problem is the Private Members' Hour and I am thinking of a way of restoring it — yes, to restore a Private Members' Hour — even the one that I will concur does not exist. I will concur that it does not exist and won't exist; that members are going to go home at 4:30 on Friday. I say that as sure as I am sitting here in this chair right now. But nevertheless, on paper it is there, maybe we can restore it so that it is no worse than it was before.

MR. JORGENSON:

Make it meaningful.

MR. GREEN:

I didn't say that. To make it exactly as it is now, which is quite a difference than saying that I would make it meaningful.

Secondly, that there be some facility for committees.

Thirdly, that the question period not be offended. And I don't think, although at one time I posed the fact two question periods in one day, that doesn't to me satisfy an opposition point of view because it dilutes the first question period. I'm looking for how this is going to be looked at publicly, and if I have two question periods it's no better than one question period, it's still a question period.

One item wasn't mentioned that I would be concerned with, but maybe that's because I'm different than everybody, that I believe in politics.

I'm worried about the weekend coverage; nobody else is worried about that. But I think politically, so I'm worried about it —(Interjection)— yes, well, you know, that's my peculiarity. I'm worried about the Saturday coverage; if I leave out Friday, am I going to miss something on Saturday? Is that the best news day, because people sit and read the paper? So I am worried about that.

I would like to ask the Attorney-General to sit down and see whether his group — and I missed the House Leader of the Opposition saying — what if we did just a little different and tried by meeting only on Friday morning, just to start with, if we meet on Friday morning, that people get home at 12:30 on Friday — and I'm not going to say 12:30, I'm going to say 1:30, but I know it's 12:30 — I'm going to say that the House will sit at 10:00, that it will adjourn at 1:30, and the last hour will be Private Members' Hour, and at 12:30 I fully expect the House Leader to get up and say, "I believe there's a disposition on the part of everyone here" . . . I mean, I'm merely predicting what I think will happen and if it doesn't, there's the Private Members' Hour, there's the Question Period, there's a half day gained with very little else happening, and then I would not work Wednesday morning. I would work the two hours —(Interjection)— somewhere here I thought that you would meet . . . I would not work any other morning. I would work starting at 2:00 o'clock, which makes up for the hours — there's only two hours lost now, eh? Because I've taken off the one hour, put it on to 12:30 to 1:30, so we only lose two hours. We pick up the two hours by meeting at 2:00 o'clock every day, and we have exactly the same amount of hours that we have now. We've got our question period, we've got our Private Members' Hour, and the opposition has a chance to see whether they're going to lose a great deal if they eliminate that Friday morning, which is what the government members would like to do so they'd have the whole day. It may be that that would be a way of easing in without testing the whole procedure.

Now I have one additional suggestion, and this one I expect some objection to, but I'm going to raise it anyway to see how far it gets, that the government House Leader can cancel Friday morning if there is a committee meeting scheduled that Friday morning, only if there is a committee meeting scheduled on Friday morning. Now we've still got the Friday meeting, but not everybody has to come. We've still got the coverage, maybe there would be better coverage of a committee meeting than there normally is, and you'd lose a Question Period, but everything else you'd keep.

MR. BLAKE:

But that's at his option, if he doesn't want to cancel it, he doesn't have to.

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MR. GREEN:

Well, you know, because I know that it's the opposition that is a problem when it comes to rule changes — and I say that kindly — I would say that maybe at the opposition's option or with concurrence. I would even try this last business with concurrence, that the House Leader go up to the House Leader of the Opposition and say, "Look, we want to meet Public Utilities tomorrow morning, can we cancel the House tomorrow," and for awhile let the opposition call the shot. If we find that they're going to say, "Well, if Public Utilities meets tomorrow, that's a good time and we're going to tear shreds off Mr. Justice George Tritschler. Let's forget the House tomorrow." But it would be at their option, and I happen to think that if it's a good committee meeting that everybody else can go home. But that be not as a rule change but be as an attempt to achieve accommodation to see what happens. That way you'll get your Friday off too. Only if there is a committee meeting scheduled, not if there is no committee meeting scheduled.

Now that's not going whole hog with what the House Leader wants, but if we can get some consensus on it, it gives us all Friday afternoon. Friday afternoon is a big afternoon, and it happens also to be a rather dead afternoon. This is thinking along opposition lines, you know, the opposition doesn't lose a great deal Friday afternoons.

MR. BLAKE:

The press always leave at noon.

MR. GREEN:

Well, you know, I'm suggesting that we have Friday afternoon extend to 1:30, but I know that it won't happen. It's a cheap suggestion, but I'm suggesting that it be in the rule on that basis. Given the fact that I don't think from what I hear the Member for Kildonan saying, that you're going to get this without a fight and if you're going to have a fight, then it's not worth it, that maybe you should try this, because that would eliminate Friday afternoon and people will find out whether they're getting the same amount of work done.

But I ask the House Leader of the Opposition, is there something terribly objectionable about what I have just said, because if there is, then I would want to try and modify it. But that way you've got the Friday coverage, you've got your Question Period, you've got your Private Members' Hour, and you've got the same number of hours by meeting at 2:00 and Friday afternoon is off.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Member for Minnedosa.

MR. BLAKE:

Mr. Chairman, I know that there's no-one believes more in the system and the institution here than the Member for Inkster and wants to see it work as well as it can and I can agree with him wholeheartedly on what he's proposed. The only thing that disturbs me a bit, and I don't know how important it may be, but we've had over the years an established sort of time and set of rules, and we have thousands and thousands of school children that come here and they want to see the House sit and they want to see the Mace brought in —(Interjection)— that's right, and we would have to do it in such a way that we're not going to take that privilege away from them. I don't know how important that is. As I say, I merely bring that up and raise that as a point. I don't know how many come Friday afternoons compared with Thursdays or Mondays. It may be a very very insignificant thing, but it just occurred in my mind that it's something that we wouldn't want to take away from them if it's an important factor. I don't maybe think that it is. It could be worked in that they could come Friday morning or Thursday.

MR. GREEN:

Your proposal takes it away altogether on Friday, this way at least leaves Friday morning.

MR. BLAKE:

That's right. If I finish Thursday night, I may go home Thursday; if I finish Friday at noon, I hope that I'll go home Friday at noon. I may not go home until Saturday, but that would be my choice and not the House's.

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MR. CHAIRMAN:

Any further discussion? The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

MR. FOX:

I am prepared to look at the suggested procedure that the Honourable Member for Inkster has suggested, but I can't make a decision on it myself. So if there is no urgency, I'm prepared to have a look at it with my caucus members and make a decision to see whether they're prepared to use it for a trial period.

MR. GREEN:

Let's make sure we all understand, that Monday through to Thursday there would be no changes except we meet at 2:00 o'clock instead of 2:30, and everything else stays the same. In other words, we don't meet Tuesday morning, that we meet Friday from 10:00 until 1:30, with the last hour being Private Members' Hour; that we talk about the House Leaders agreeing that where there is a committee meeting scheduled on Friday morning, that with the concurrence of both sides — and you don't even have to say this — that the Friday session not proceed. That really doesn't have to be said, but that can be an attempted practice. And we've said this before, that we would try. We did try without putting it down in the rules, that the opposition would name the committees that meet outside of the House, and we did that and it worked.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Attorney-General.

MR. MERCIER:

Mr. Chairman, up until this point in time, with all due respect to the opposition House Leader, I have not been informed that there was any inclination of somehow trying to adjust or accommodate everybody's wishes to arrive at something that was mutually satisfactory but the opposition House Leader has indicated that he is prepared to look at the proposals and some of the discussions. I have some concerns about what the Member for Inkster has raised but in order to try to come to a mutually satisfactory accommodation of everybody's wishes I would certainly prefer that and I think everybody would prefer that. So rather than introduce formally the suggested amendments I would be prepared to simply leave this matter in abeyance for the present time and allow the opposition House Leader and I to review this matter further and review perhaps even the transcript and the suggestions that have been raised and perhaps we'll call the Rules Committee again early on in the Session, during the Throne Speech Debate, and perhaps by that time we will have been able to come to a solution that satisfies everybody's interests.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Is that agreeable? The Honourable Member for St. Vital.

MR. D. JAMES WALDING (St. Vital):

Mr. Chairman, as we've said before to the Attorney-General the opposition caucus had quite a clear consensus opposed to the change to a four-day week. I believe, as Mr. Fox says, we're prepared to consider the changes outlined by the Member for Inkster. There had been some mention made earlier on about a move towards two sittings a year; I'm really not clear from the government representatives as to how they stand on that.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Attorney-General.

MR. MERCIER:

I suppose, Mr. Chairman, we stand the same way as the members opposite stood when they were in government, that there are some within each caucus who would like to move in that direction but there has been no decision yet arrived at so there is no firm position yet.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Member for St. Vital.

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MR. WALDING:

Can I make a request that at our next meeting you might be prepared to give us a firmer indication than that?

MR. GREEN:

Mr. Chairman, may I ask, before the Member for St. Vital, with regard to the two sessions that are held in the other provinces, is that a rule? Because my impression is that the sessions are called on the advice of the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council and that what they are doing is holding that right now and I suppose that they consider that the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council could have called a session in the fall. But is it a rule, is it a rule in the other jurisdictions or just when they call it? —(Interjection)— Yes. It seems to me that what the Member for Kildonan and the Member for St. Vital are urging is not a rule change but that the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council thinks in terms of meeting more -- without trying to cram the session into February to June but meeting in the fall and I gather that they too have been thinking that way.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Member for Minnedosa.

MR. BLAKE:

Mr. Chairman, that's right. I think we've had some discussion in our caucus on — in fact we'd hoped this year that we may have called it in December and run through part of the legislation, the Throne Speech and the Debate and then adjourned and come back in the later part of January maybe and carry on and legislative counsel has indicated to me that the other provinces — it's only one session, it's not two sessions as I indicated, to double their pay. They break a session and then reconvene it. So I can't see any problem there. The Attorney-General mentioned earlier that we're working towards this we just haven't been able to get it into place yet and I think it would be quite desirable in our particular instance here that we could spread the workload a little better and you could have a bit of a breathing space in between and I think it would work very very well if we can arrive at a method of instituting that into our Assembly rules.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

MR. FOX:

Just a matter of clarification, Mr. Chairman. When I suggested the two sessions it was not two separate sittings but an adjourned one session. There are some advantages to it, because if you split up the session the time in between can be utilized for committee work, it can be utilized for the public getting involved in whatever legislation there is and we wouldn't be doing it under pressure. At the present time often when we're already into speed-up we're getting bills that have to have representation from the public and we find ourselves sitting up until midnight and asking the public to sit here to make their presentation. I think with a split sitting you could allocate a lot of that kind of work to the hiatus, to the in-between period and you could do it much more leisurely and much more cogently too.

MR. GREEN:

I have no objection in principle to this kind of thinking, I am not nearly as sanguine about the fact that the work will be done more leisurely. I believe that there is a great danger in that the Parkinson's rule applies more to the length of parliamentary debate than it does to managerial administrative work, that the length of parliamentary debate will expand directly proportional to the length of time in which it is available for it to be taking place.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Attorney-General.

MR. MERCIER:

Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a brief comment on this whole area. In order to attempt to solve the problem that the opposition House Leader has referred to we have tried during the past two sessions to introduce legislation as early on in the session as possible so that it's available and can be . . .

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MR. GREEN:

You tried but you didn't succeed.

MR. MERCIER:

No, I think we have succeeded in introducing the bulk of the legislation at a pretty early date. We had a lot of difficulty getting the opposition to deal with it but once they joined in then it was dealt with. But the Member for Inkster raises the correct position, it's not a rule change that's being proposed by members of the opposition it's a matter of the government as a government deciding when the session shall begin and adjourn and reconvene, etc. And while there are advantages there are disadvantages too, not the least of which the Member for Inkster refers to, and a concern maybe of some people, that the fall debate may to a great extent be just a repetition of the spring debate.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Before I recognize the next speaker there's a small matter, I think the Attorney-General previously asked that we would look at the transcripts of this. Perhaps it would be advisable that we have a motion that the proceedings be transcribed and distributed. I don't think we've had that motion.

MR. MERCIER:

That was in English.

MR. BLAKE:

I was going to add, will they be available in French?

MR. JORGENSEN:

We record but we must have a motion to transcribe.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

We have a motion that the proceedings be transcribed. Is that agreeable? (Agreed)

The Honourable Member for Crescentwood.

MR. WARREN STEEN (Crescentwood):

Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to say that I am sure that if we were to follow the Attorney-General's outline of hours of sitting, the proposal that is before us, that the session would still last 90 to 100 sitting days and even though you might only be sitting four days a week, that we would still in total have likely the same number of days. It's been some years since we had the 60-day sessions and so on and it just seems to be common practice now to sit approximately 100 days a year. I personally like the proposal the Attorney-General presented today and I was hopeful that it would have passed.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

There has been an inclination to deal with this matter at a later date. I think there has been some very fruitful discussion on it at the present time. Is there anything further on that particular matter? If not we'll move on to the next proposal that was put forward by the Honourable Attorney-General and that was the proposal dealing with the handling of the Minister's salary in Committee of Supply.

The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

MR. FOX:

Mr. Chairman, we feel that it has worked out fairly well and also quite equitable in respect to the allocation of hours. It's true that some Ministers have brought it on themselves that debate has developed early in the consideration of the Estimates for some departments and this is also possibly true of some of the opposition members who want to make speeches instead of staying within the particular guidelines that we happen to be at that particular moment. But there is one salient feature about having the Minister's salary at the end and that is the fact that since we have the two-committee system many members cannot attend both committees at the same time and this is one advantage that they have, that at the tail end if their particular item has not been discussed or debated or at least

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touched on they can still have a chance to go at that particular matter whatever it happens to be. Some of our members would probably prefer to have brief introductory comments after the Minister has made his opening statement but we also recognize that you can't have it both ways. We could possibly look at giving them five or ten minutes to just make general comments to compliment the department and then carry on from there to the detailed items. But that would be going in the opposite direction to what the Attorney-General wants, he would like to have the debate over and done with. In the past, as we all are aware, when we had the Minister's Salary first sometimes it took most of the time of the debate and the detailed items were just passed over quickly and glossed through. I think we have done a much better job since we have gone to the new system whereby we leave the Minister's Salary to the end. The detailed items have been very well debated and only those features that haven't been touched on are brought up during the Minister's debate. And of course depending on the Minister's attitude that will create or lessen debate.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. JORGENSON:

Mr. Speaker, what the Member for Kildonan says is quite true except for one thing and that is it hasn't been working. The fact is the original intention of the structure of the rules as they are now was to leave the Minister's salary until the last so it could be debated then. It is quite obvious that members of the opposition — and that includes members of the previous opposition as well — are not interested in debating the Minister's salary at the end, never have. I think you can count on the fingers of one hand the number of times that the Minister's salary has been dealt with. There is an inclination and it's quite natural, a natural inclination on the part of members to get at the Minister immediately he is introducing his Estimates. All we're doing is providing that opportunity, we're trying to accommodate you. What you're doing now is contrary in my opinion to the rules, by going on to the next item and then debating the Minister's salary on the Administrative item. What we're going to do is to try and provide you an opportunity to debate it right away and have that debate and get it over with. We're not trying to take anything away from you, we're trying to accommodate the opposition by providing an opportunity for that debate immediately and I think that's the best time for it. Experience in the House has indicated that's the best time; experience in the House during the course of the last four or five years has indicated that that's the time that the members want to debate. All right, if they want to debate at that time let's give them the opportunity to do just that.

I might say with respect to your point about members who may not be at the committee at that time, they'll have an opportunity if that debate is going to stretch on, the Minister's salary is going to stretch on over two or three days. Surely, during the course of those two or three days that member who wants to speak can come in and make a speech. If he can't, then he has a further opportunity when the Main Supply Motion is brought in, there is another full-fledged debate.

So there are plenty of opportunities. All we are attempting to do is to legalize what is happening right now and that is a debate on the Minister's Salary which is now taking place at the beginning of the Estimates, and then you have the opportunity again at the end.

Well, as my honourable friend says, you can't have it both ways. If you are going to debate at the outset, then fine, we will accommodate you, but if you are not well then I don't think that we can permit what is going on. That is a violation of the Rules — I have always said it was a violation of the Rules to debate the Minister's Salary under the Administration Item. I have protested it both when I was in the opposition and since I have been in government. I don't think that it is in accordance with our Rules to be debating — it was never intended, if you are speaking of the spirit of the Rules, it was never intended that the debate take place under the Administration Item, that it would be taking place at the end of the Estimates when the Minister's Salary came up for debate. It hasn't worked. Why try to continue something that isn't working?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN:

Mr. Chairman, I want to start by indicating that I believe that I am going to take exactly

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the same position that I would have taken regardless of my own particular change in status.

I don't believe that the debate on the Estimates is going to change no matter what the rule is and that it is correct to say that the members of the opposition have attempted to get at the more meaty points of the Minister's Estimates at the beginning, no matter where they appear on the list, and to fail to recognize that is merely to put blinkers on.

I know that in support of various members of my group I got up and argued on a motion or an objection on the basis of relevance, but the House Leader has got up and said this has to wait until you get down the list. I have got up and said that's not true, we are now debating the Deputy Minister. Everything that's in a department falls under the Deputy Minister and this can be done.

With all respect to any protestations that that is not going to happen, I say that it is going to happen, because I have seen what has happened. By the way, just so that there is no misunderstanding, I said it would happen anyway. And what we are inviting if we try to suggest otherwise is that we are going to invite an objection as to relevance. We are going to have the Chairman rule in favour of that objection some day. We are going to have the government members support the Chairman's ruling. The discussion will held to be out of order, the bells will ring, there will be protests and what have you, and then the next Item will come up and there will be another contorted debate on the question of relevance as to whether some Item which is No. 29 obliquely falls into some Item which is No. 2.

Now, I believe that that is what is going to take place and I believe that that will take place whether you change these Rules or don't change these Rules, that that is where we are going to be.

The members of the House want to, at the earliest moment, when the Minister gets on his feet, deal with those matters which they feel are important in the department and have done so. I am not going to say without exception but in large part have done so. So why not debate the Minister's Salary? There is no other change here or am I reading it wrong? You still have the opportunity of making a Motion to close debate, but it would be on the Minister's Salary rather than on the next Item. When you close the debate on the Minister's Salary then you are at the next Item. Then you can debate what was closed out on your Motion. I mean if you can't do that then you have got no imagination. You will find it some place in the remaining Item and therefore this fiction of going down the numbers seems to me something that if we continue we will continue but it won't be because we are going down the Items, it will be because there have not been sustained objections on the basis of relevance, so I see no great harm in this.

However, I repeat, unless you want this particular debate to take place on a Motion to amend the Rules substantively and then have a fight about it, I think that you had better get together with the Opposition House Leader to see whether you can't find some way of concurring on doing that which is agreeable to both sides, because I don't think that you are going to solve this by a Rule change.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Member for Minnedosa first.

MR. BLAKE:

I think what the Member for Inkster is saying we can agree with, he is saying let's find a way to do this when we are in agreement with it rather than putting something in that is going to cause —(Interjection)— No, no, some problems, because as he mentioned the Minister changed one rule and he is a legal person, there is going to be a mind at work immediately to find a way to get around that rule and get the debate that he wants on the floor available anyway.

I think what we are interested in doing by changing this particular Rule is probably speeding up the process of getting the Estimates through the House, and we know that that is where the minute examination of government expenditures and government management comes in and we certainly don't want to take anything away from that. I think in the interest of speeding up the process of Estimates and the debate of the Estimates, if we were to bring in a Rule that would say that anyone wanting to speak on the Estimates had to sit in the Committee for sixty minutes before they were allowed to discuss the Estimates. Because we have seen it happen when somebody roars in here, gets the mike and just tears the whole Committee upside down, raises hell, and five minutes later they are gone, and accomplished nothing, but they got on the local bugle at home or whatever they want to accomplish . . . —(Interjection)— They obviously did for their own results, but they haven't really

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accomplished anything in the process of examining the Estimates of the House for their side or anyone else's. They have solved a problem parochially at home, but if we want to speed up this process of getting the Estimates through the House, make him sit here for a hour and listen to all the other clap-trap that goes on before he is allowed to speak and he is not going to be here too often. We all know who is guilty of it, and I have been guilty of it myself, I am not denying that, but there are some experts at it in this House and they'll always be here. So if you could find some way to curtail them in some way you would have your problem solved without the Rule change that we are after now.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

MR. FOX:

Yes, Mr. Chairman. I can concur that we should all try to improve and husband our time as much as possible in order to expedite the work of the House, but what has to be borne in mind that when we went to this Rule change in respect to a two Committee sitting and the Minister's Salary being at the tail end, we also gave up a number of Items that we had. We had Concurrence Motions on every department at that particular time, we gave that up.

MR. JORGENSON:

Oh no, we didn't give that up.

MR. FOX:

Well, all right it doesn't matter. That was the quid pro quo, that was the quid pro quo, so consequently if you are going to go back to the old Rule to have the Minister's Salary in front, then you have to start giving the opposition some other methods of getting their debates in for those who are not able to sit in on both committees. That is your particular problem that you created when you went to the two committee system and you changed some of the format that you had, that you gave up concurrences and you put the Minister's Salary at the end so that those who couldn't catch everything in one committee could at least some in and get their particular issues done.

At the present time if we move the Minister's Salary to the front, for those who miss it, they have had it, and sometimes it is not possible to sit in on both committees, because you may be a critic for one and you have to sit there all the time.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Attorney-General.

MR. MERCIER:

Mr. Chairman, if there is a weakness in that criticism it is this I think. I think we first of all have to recognize, I am sure that the debate on the Minister's Salary is not going to be that short that somebody is going to miss it because they are not in Room 254 and they are sitting in the Legislative Chamber. In fact, what it probably does, if that is the concern, is give them a greater opportunity, because when they come from the Chamber into Room 254 to speak on the Attorney-General's Estimates and the Salary debate is on they can join in at any time rather than having to wait for Item 29 or Item 18 or whatever. It probably makes it easier.

Whether this kind of a Rule change would shorten Estimates is quite debatable, I think. The most that I would expect that it would do is eliminate some of the repetition that would go on and even that . . .

MR. JORGENSON:

Is doubtful.

MR. MERCIER:

. . . is doubtful.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Member for Inkster.

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MR. GREEN:

Mr. Chairman, I want to try to again accommodate, see whether there is a way of accommodating the suggested problem.

I think that it is possible, if I was sitting in the opposition and the Minister's Estimates had been debated, and then they went down the line and they didn't block off and then we came to the last Item, he has to read the last Item, Resolved that there be granted to the Minister "X" amount of dollars, that is the last line of the sheet, can't you debate that Item? I think I could, I think I could get up and say, no, this Item should be reduced to one dollar and as long as there has to be a separate closure motion on the last Item, in other words you can move closure of everything down to the last figure and there has to be a separate debate on the last Item, that is in effect a Concurrence Motion. Am I saying something that is wrong?

MR. JORGENSON:

No.

MR. GREEN:

And when the last Item is brought up, I get up and say, no, I want to debate the total package, that it not be -- in other words, I almost said it, not be concurred with. Now as long as that last line requires a separate closure motion then I think that the House Leader of the Opposition has got his final debate on the Minister's Salary, which he has now.

MR. FOX:

You are having too many Minister's debates.

MR. GREEN:

Yes, but I see nothing wrong with that, you see because I believe . . .

MR. FOX:

I have no objection to having two, that is fine, have two.

MR. GREEN:

I believe that you are doing that now. I believe that you are having a ministerial debate on the first Item and that you are having a ministerial debate on the last item, and on the second, and on the third. But the fact is that you are having a ministerial debate to start with and it is going to be that way no matter how you change the Rules.

The House Leader of the Opposition says, well but, at least now we know that there is a last debate which took the place of Concurrences, right? Well, why don't we put whatever we have to do to ensure that the last line, the total money package, has to be debated separately. In other words, that any closure motion has to be brought independently on that last Item, then you've got to debate to close off that Minister's Item, in which case you have got a ministerial debate. I believe I can do it now. I don't believe I need a Rule change. I don't think you can stop me from debating the last figure unless you move a Closure Motion. So if you have got that then you have got the Ministerial Item, you have got the numbers down the line which you will then have to go through, the Ministerial Item is first, it closes that, you have still got to go through all those other items and then you have got a debate on the last item which is the equivalent of the Concurrence Motion except it is in Committee and not in the House, which means that it is more flexible, rather than less flexible, because in the House you get up and make one speech and you can't speak again and you have got a Concurrence Motion in Committee, which is more flexible than a Concurrence Motion in the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Any further discussion? The Honourable Attorney-General.

MR. MERCIER:

Mr. Chairman, again I think I would put this Item in the same as the preceding one and perhaps the Opposition House Leader and myself could review this proposed amendment again prior to the sitting of the House and we will give consideration to it at an early meeting of the Rules Committee once the Session has begun.

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MR. CHAIRMAN:

Is that agreeable? (Agreed)

Is there any other item of business before the committee, anything that any member wants to raise?

We have a motion for adjournment. Is that agreed? (Agreed)

The meeting is adjourned.