

Procedure and Organization

that question? I happen to have my music with me and you can ask a question today." That is the only time government backbenchers are tolerated. That is the only time they are heard. The only time the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works has spoken is when he says he will take something as notice. The hon. member is a great one to speak from his seat.

The hon. member for Vancouver Quadra (Mr. Deachman) spoke this morning in exculpation of the attendance of members yesterday afternoon. The hon. member does not realize it, but from approximately 3.15 p.m. yesterday afternoon the same move could have been made as was made at 5.05 p.m. I was in the house until just before five o'clock and at least half a dozen times I counted the number of government members present. When the Leader of the Opposition was speaking they had the effrontery to be absent, while the opposition had over 30 members.

An hon. Member: Instead of leaving it—

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Will the hon. member please let me speak.

Some hon. Members: Sit down!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Richard): Order, please. The hon. member for Edmonton West has the floor.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): When the Leader of the Opposition was speaking at no time were there more than eight members on the government side in their seats.

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): There were no more than eight.

An hon. Member: There was only one of your members here.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Richard): Order, please. I ask hon. gentlemen to maintain some decorum and allow the hon. member for Edmonton West to complete his remarks. If the hon. member has a question, he may request permission from the Chair to ask it.

● (2:40 p.m.)

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): The hon. member keeps insisting there was only one member here. He does not even know he had been sucked in.

Mr. Deachman: It is recorded.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): That may be at 5.05 p.m. but, as I said, the same action [Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West).]

was quite possible from 3.15 onward. You do not know how many times you were counted in your lobby to see how many members you had there. It was clearly understood. This pattern had been apparent for quite some time, and it is very simple to do it. I do not have to explain, but it could have happened at 4.30 just as well as at five minutes after five o'clock, and the day before as well.

Let us be clear about it. The hon. member will not go on television tonight hollering "filibuster, filibuster." Why, to him two speeches in a row constitute a filibuster. Mind you, Mr. Speaker, when he speaks we consider that a filibuster on the part of the government. He makes only the one speech.

I wish to say a few things now about 75B and 75c. I oppose 75B, but not at all on the basis of the majority question. I feel, again in anticipation of the worth of the committee system, that no government house leader, and this includes my own party's house leader, can be well enough advised as to agree with the other house leaders that the committee proceedings on this or that bill shall take so many days, say, five days. For one thing there is already a committee on allocation of space and facilities. The house leaders would be competing against other requirements. In committees we are short of space and of staff. We do not know what witnesses are going to come before us and what priority we will have with regard to the printing of the transcript. This is important to the administration of committees. Committee members must have quick reproduction of the testimony given in a committee if they are to make intelligent comments.

As a classic example I cite the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs which has been discussing high interest rates with the governor of the Bank of Canada. The governor brought in a very complex statement of 29 typewritten pages which took over a committee session to read. There were questions. The problems are difficult. The governor gave very lengthy, reasoned answers. But who on earth could sit there and make a complete note of them, particularly those members who signified their intention to ask further questions? How can they keep all of this in their heads from Tuesday to Thursday or from Thursday to Tuesday, or from one session to another if sessions are more numerous than that. We need the transcripts but as yet there is no established priority for them. There is no indication that we are going to get them.