

*Motion for Concurrence in Report*

government could bring in, in one motion, a provision regarding the time for each and every one of the 15, 25 or 50 items on the order paper.

Before you know it there could be a motion providing one day for each second reading, or providing one hour for each of five items in one day. It could provide for time in standing committees, that that time would be one day each, or even less than that. It could provide for report stage and third reading to be one hour each. Oh, this is efficiency, Mr. Speaker, efficiency gone mad; but it is possible under this provision. I say that the most horrendous part of it all is this right to include any kind of arrangement having to do with the disposition or allocation of time to any item or items of the business of the house or any of the committees of the house. Surely that has to be altered.

I suggest that there are some things which might be negotiated if we get this matter back to the special committee, if the government tonight decides that it will accept the amendment of the Leader of the Opposition. In the first place I think it should be made clear in the order that a quorum shall be a majority of the members of the committee. Let me come in a moment to the question of what should be the composition of the committee and how you determine a majority.

In the second place I think it should be made clear that no report can be made from that committee unless it is at least a majority report. In the third place I would be prepared to make this suggestion: that there be only two kinds of reports and that they be treated differently.

On the one hand if a report is unanimous, then it should be possible for that report to include two, three or four items. Maybe we should specify the number of items, but certainly it could be more than one, and if the report is unanimous it should be decided by the house without debate. But if it is a report that is only a majority one—

**Mr. Speaker:** I apologize for interrupting the hon. member in the middle of a sentence, but I would like to ask the house whether the hon. member has leave to go beyond his allotted time?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** I thank Your Honour and the house and I shall be very brief. I was saying that if the committee brings in a report that is not unanimous but only a majority report, then it  
[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

should cover only one item of business, not the omnibus Criminal Code bill, the sale of Air Canada, and three or four other things at the same time; and in that case there should be reasonable debate. Maybe the two hours suggested is enough, maybe it should be a bit more. That can be negotiated.

I was speaking a moment ago about the majority. At the present time the committee consists of four members. I would settle for a majority of the four. In other words, that would be three. But if the government thinks that is too high and wants to negotiate it, maybe we could enlarge the committee by putting two government members on it and three opposition members, and then have provision for a majority to be three out of five. In that case in order to win its point the government would have to win the support of at least one of the opposition parties.

I have not told the other opposition parties that I was going to make these suggestions, Mr. Speaker. That is one reason I do not put them forward as a subamendment but rather as negotiable propositions. But I think surely among reasonable men, people who believe in democracy, who believe in section 49 of the British North America Act, who believe in the rule of the majority, who believe in negotiating and compromising, surely among people of that kind we can arrive at an acceptable formula for a proceedings committee that will plan the business of the house: And I mean, plan it.

This proposed standing order is not an order for planning the business of the house. This is a standing order for muzzling the house.

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

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** This is a standing order which gives the government house leader the right to impose limitations that no free parliament could possibly accept.

As I said earlier, I am glad to hear that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) is going to take part in this debate tonight after my hon. friend from the Creditiste party makes his speech. I hope he will indicate that he has been listening earnestly to the proposals made from this side of the house. I say to him again that this is not fun and games. We are not trying to develop a lengthy debate. We are not trying to keep the house in session Christmas week, although if necessary we certainly will.

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