

*Procedure and Organization*

that in many cases the majority of members in the house feel a legislative measure is wrong.

Very often we on this side of the house must defend members on the government side who do not agree with a certain legislative measure because they must sit mute in their places. We have seen a terrible example of this during the past week. An hon. member who was chairman of a committee was being compromised daily but had to sit mute in his seat because he was a member of the government party. It was only because the opposition on a united basis managed to get the government to change its attitude that he was relieved of a duty to resign his seat.

Let me mention some of the things which have happened during this session in proof of what I suggest can happen on a co-operative basis, and in proof of my suggestion that rule 75c will be of no particular benefit in the over-all picture and very damaging in the narrow picture. I have here today's order paper in which is listed the government orders adopted during this session. This is issue No. 185, so presumably we have been sitting for 185 days. Listed on pages 8 to 17 are those government orders adopted at this session of parliament. There are 116, and that does not include various items referred to committees as shown on pages 12 to 15. The opposition permitted, if I may use that word—perhaps allowed is a better word—116 government orders, to go through with debate in some cases and without debate in other cases. What will the government do if it puts through this closure measure in an attempt to jam everything through parliament? Under rule 75c I suggest we will have to multiply the number of days to put through as many legislative measures by four. This would increase our sitting days to approximately 450, or approximately two years of continuous sitting.

I am merely trying to prove that you cannot successfully proceed with a legislative program, even if you know what it is, by pressure. If an opposition takes it upon itself to force the government into using a rule such as 75c on each of its legislative items a government could not get through a quarter of what we have accomplished so far this session. What I am trying to point out is that you do not successfully pass legislative items in parliament by using a heavy hand. This has never been the case and I have seen this on several occasions.

[Mr. Aiken.]

Let me close my remarks by pointing out that the proposed rule 75c is too severe for the opposition to accept. We are prepared to co-operate in respect of any legislative program. We have co-operated to a great extent during this session. Hon. members might ask what we intend to do next session. They will have to wait to find out, and a good deal will depend on what happens with this proposed rule 75c.

We have had a good legislative session and we have done a great deal of work. We in the opposition are prepared to co-operate if we know what the legislative program is, but how can the house leaders sit down and decide what they are going to do at certain times without letting us know about the government's intention? We now have a reasonably programmed timetable. New rules were brought in last December, and other rules have evolved over the last ten years. This has assisted us somewhat in dealing with certain legislative matters including the debate in reply to the throne speech, our consideration of the estimates, legislation and so forth. In this regard the opposition has co-operated. It is up to the government to decide what legislation it intends to bring in, and it is up to the government to persuade the opposition from time to time that this legislation is necessary.

• (5:30 p.m.)

We are prepared to accept a reasonable arrangement for the orderly conduct of business. Rule 75A is reasonable. Rule 75B, if the majority of the parties of this house agree, can be acted upon. But I am going to call on the government now to have its spokesman stand up and advise us whether it is prepared to withdraw the limitation on the committee stage, for example. There was an intimation in what the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) said yesterday that perhaps the one day in committee stage was unreasonable, that perhaps the time could be extended. All right, that is a good place to start because the committees need time to consider these matters.

Is the government prepared to increase the minimum number of days spent in debating a bill? If so, I would like to hear them say so. Is the government prepared to set an over-all time during which any piece of legislation may be passed? I think it is reasonable to expect them to say what it is because yesterday the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) said that the way things go in the house, it will take three to four weeks to get