

*House of Commons Procedures*

**Mr. Fairweather:** Is it the intention of the Government to set up such a Committee? If it is not a Standing Committee, will the Committee on Procedure and Organization be reconstituted in the next few months?

**Mr. McIlraith:** I do not want to give a categorical answer at the moment. I will take under consideration the suggestion that there be a Standing Committee. One of the difficulties of the last Committee on Procedure, when you consider the matter of answers to written questions which we have been discussing, was that there was no Minister on it from the Government side, no person who had Ministerial experience. I prefer to leave the question asked by the hon. Member for Burnaby-Coquitlam unanswered at the moment, and I will take it into consideration.

**Mr. Douglas:** I might just offer the Minister an alternative. If he feels there are obstacles, which I cannot think about at the moment, to making it a Standing Committee I think we would be prepared to settle for an undertaking that the Government would set up again the Committee we had last year.

**Mr. McIlraith:** I must correct myself. I said a moment ago there was no Ministerial representation from the Government side on that Committee. There was the Minister of Labour, who was the Government representative. I regret my inadvertence. I do not want to give a commitment that a Committee will be set up in the form it was last year. I want to consider the matter. We may have some kind of party conference about it, but I am not prepared at the moment to give a commitment as to how we should approach it. I am prepared to say that I will follow it up.

**Mr. Knowles:** I have one question, Mr. Chairman. Does the Minister recall that the Prime Minister, when he introduced these rule changes, suggested that one of the reasons it was possible to bring forward changes of this kind was that there had been a Committee of the House studying the matter for a couple of years. Does that not lend weight to the point made by the hon. Member for Burnaby-Coquitlam? In view of the importance of the changes we are now making, would it not be a good idea to have a Committee continuously studying the subject?

**Mr. McIlraith:** Yes, I am aware the Prime Minister said that. I am aware also of where the suggestion that he say this came from.

**Mr. Scott:** I have a short amendment upon which I wanted to test the Committee.

[Mr. Douglas.]

**The Chairman:** Order, please; there is an amendment before the Committee at the moment.

• (9:50 p.m.)

**Mr. Scott:** I am sorry; I should have said subamendment. It seems to me, Mr. Chairman the effect of the half hour question period is really going to be that the private Member is virtually going to be cut out of that period. It seems to me this will follow almost automatically because of the practice of recognizing the senior Members of the House during the question period. I am not sure we can particularly complain, as that practice has been followed for some time; but the net effect of this will be that private Members from now on will have virtually no part at all in the question period, because in the half hour there will not be enough time for them to participate, due to supplementaries, etc., from the front benches.

We recognize the need to shorten the question period, but the hon. Member for Royal hit it on the head when he said shortening the time will not improve its quality. In fairness to private Members, they should have at least one opportunity a week to participate in the question period and for that reason I suggest to the Government House Leader that the question period on Mondays, at least, be without time limit. It may be private Members will not take advantage of the opportunity but it will be there for them if they wish to avail themselves of it.

Therefore I propose that the amendment be amended by deleting the words, "exceed one hour" and substituting therefor "be so limited." This may sound confusing but on reading the amendment it can be seen it ends with the words shall not exceed one hour.

**The Chairman:** Is the committee ready for the question?

Amendment to the amendment (Mr. Scott) negatived: yeas 37; nays 41.

**The Chairman:** I declare the amendment lost.

Amendment (Mr. McIlraith) agreed to.

**The Chairman:** Does this conclude the discussion on clause 5?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Cowan:** Mr. Chairman, in considering clause 6 of the resolution I would like to make some comments with regard to questions of privilege, inasmuch as direct reference was made to me on Tuesday during