

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, July 8, 1969

The house met at 2 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PROCEDURE

NEW PROVISIONS RESPECTING DEBATING TIME ALLOTMENT—WITHDRAWAL OF MOTION

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a suggestion with respect to today's business in the house which I hope might find general acceptance. As you know, government order No. 99 standing in my name is a motion to add proposed standing orders 75A, 75B and 75c. As I indicated last night, the advantage of this motion over the motion standing in the name of the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Blair) is that my motion would enable the house to amend directly the proposed standing orders, if that be desired, rather than refer them back to the standing committee for amendment. Although the former motion would obviously be the simpler procedure, I think it was apparent from last evening's discussion that that motion would be resisted by some hon. members and indeed that there would be protracted objections by way of points of order and perhaps questions of privilege before the merits of the proposals could be discussed.

It seems to me therefore that the quickest way to get down to the merits of the proposed standing orders would be to enable my colleague, the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton, to put his motion.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): It seems to me that this is what hon. members were seeking last night.

Mr. Woolliams: Did the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) talk to you?

An hon. Member: You must be overworked.

Mr. Trudeau: Do you want flexibility or not?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): I would be quite prepared to yield on my motion, in case there is any risk that as a result of the Chair's ruling last night my motion would have precedence, and if necessary, with the unanimous consent of the house, will be glad to withdraw it so the hon. member can move his motion.

• (2:10 p.m.)

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Whether or not the minister wishes to withdraw his motion is a matter for him. The position we have taken regarding the point on which Your Honour has partly ruled is that certain vestigial rights are possessed by the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton. If he chooses to exercise his rights, or, rather, to carry out the duty imposed on him by the committee, we shall, of course, contribute to the debate which will follow in accordance with our responsibilities. But we shall do this without compromising the position we have taken, namely that the President of the Privy Council had no right to bring on the motion he did in the circumstances which existed.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): As the house is well aware, Mr. Speaker, the only reason we are still in session is to deal with this question of procedure. It is not our desire to stay and deal with it at all. But the government has reached a certain decision, and so we are here. We feel that if we must deal with this question we should deal with it according to the rules and we are glad, therefore, that the President of the Privy Council has seen fit to let the house proceed in accordance with the standing orders.

[Translation]

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, first I want to say how happy I am. The attitude of the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) proves that the House of Commons is not wasting its time, that the perhaps virulent debate of last night has borne fruit and that the President of the Privy Council having slept on it has, so to speak, seen the light.

Mr. Speaker, we are happy that the President of the Privy Council has realized that we