

Procedure and Organization

Yesterday when I heard the hon. member for Peel South (Mr. Chappell) talk about the arithmetic of parliament, and observed his attempt to divide the opposition by saying that it should be a majority of the government and the official opposition which should prevail, I realized his inexperience as a result of his short period in the house. This is a man who is interested in the expropriation bill. The debate on that matter should last at least two or three weeks if it is to be properly aired. When one thinks of the legislation in respect of patents one must realize the necessity for the utmost co-operation in dealing with this important matter.

• (4:50 p.m.)

It could be fairly asked: What does the opposition want? It could be simply answered: The opposition wants the amendment to refer this question to the committee to be passed, so that it may delete 75c.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Gilbert: Why do we want this? The answer is that there has been no past need, there is no present need, and there certainly does not appear to be any future need for it. The experience of the past year indicates a necessity for the co-operation of house leaders in allocating a reasonable length of time to debate important matters. The attempt by the government last Friday to bring forward a subamendment to split the opposition was properly dealt with by the Speaker. We, of the opposition parties, will have no part of splitting the opposition on such a vital matter.

The main issue that prevails today is a decision between dictatorship and democracy. When we talk about democracy we are really talking about the persuasive process that should prevail in Canada, whereby representatives of all parts of the country come to this chamber and deal with legislation on the basis of discussion, co-operation and agreement. This is the proper process to be adopted in parliament; consensus should be arrived at. This is why, if we are to continue on the road of democracy, it is highly necessary that rule 75c be deleted in order that we may restore the good will and co-operation that heretofore prevailed this session.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, before the hon. gentleman resumes his seat I wonder whether he would accept a question.

Mr. Gilbert: Certainly.

Mr. Reid: The hon. member mentioned the British experience. Would he be prepared to accept British standing orders Nos. 31 and 32, which are to be found in *Hansard* of July 10 at pages 11080 and 11081? Is the hon. member prepared to accept the British system in this respect, in lieu of 75c?

Mr. Gilbert: Mr. Speaker, I am really surprised that the hon. member should rise in his place and ask me a question of that nature. I am not sure whether he belongs to the Liberal party or the Liberal Labour party. I am not sure whether he will exercise his right with regard to 75B and say that a majority of the Liberal Labour party will be necessary before we proceed with legislation in the house.

It is absolutely necessary that the members of the committee get together and work out a reasonable compromise with regard to the rules and organization of the house. The insertion into his debate of the standing orders used in the British house is not important; in fact, it is irrelevant. It is important to arrive at a consensus of the members of all parties in the house so that we have a system of rules and orders by which we can abide and with which we agree. If we do this we will restore the friendliness and co-operation that has prevailed this session.

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, I think at a time when it is estimated that over 500 million people are glued to their television sets watching the Apollo 11 mission, which if successful will probably go down in history as one of the greatest accomplishments of mankind, is hardly the time to assume that there is a great deal of direct interest by the public in what is taking place this afternoon in the House of Commons, or that by speaking on this occasion one is in the spotlight, as it were, of public notice.

The wide effect that electronic communications have had in our lives is illustrated by the story told about a teacher of ten-year-olds who took her class to see the famous painting "Whistler's Mother" and asked them to write a few words about it. One little lad wrote: It seemed it was a picture of an old lady waiting for the repairman to bring back her television set.

I believe we live in an age when we do not give enough time and contemplation to some of the basic things we take for granted. For example, if we wanted to be cold-bloodedly practical it might be more efficient, for the opposition parties, if they could afford it, to