

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

PROCEDURE AND ORGANIZATION

MOTION FOR CONCURRENCE IN THIRD REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

The house resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Blair that the third report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization presented to the house on Friday, June 20, 1969, be concurred in, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Baldwin (p.10963).

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, if I rise now, it is with the purpose of supporting the amendment moved by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) which is aimed at sending the third report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization back to committee with instructions to amend it by striking out rule 75c.

● (5:10 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker, not only did I follow closely this debate, I also read most of the speeches made in this house in the past ten days. I have been impressed by the statements made on both sides of the house, but especially by the opposition members, who want to protect this institution.

I have also been impressed by the statement of a few government members who, with great obedience, have accepted the idea of their leader of establishing a dictatorship in this parliamentary institution.

As lately as yesterday, a government member, namely the member for Bruce (Mr. Whicher) said that on June 25, 1968 the Canadian people had decided to give the Liberal party and its leader the necessary power to rule and govern this country.

One could discuss this statement at length, Mr. Speaker, but surely the Canadian people did not give their support to the Liberal party in order to establish a dictatorship in Canada.

This statement made by the hon. member for Bruce is completely illogical even though, as pointed out by the member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker), the reins of government have been given to three socialists I very much doubt that the Canadians were really aware of it.

If as a result of the last election, the government has full authority to enforce a dictatorship, it must be kept in mind that the electoral campaign was conducted with much publicity.

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A political party with plenty of electoral funds can easily hire the best publicity experts and that is exactly what the Liberal party did.

Thanks to a well conducted publicity, campaign, one can make the people accept almost anything, with only a few exceptions.

Then, Mr. Speaker, if the majority of Canadian voters supported the Liberal party, the fact remains that many others gave their support to the Conservative party, the N.D.P. or the Ralliement Cr ditiste.

Under the circumstances, the supporters of the opposition parties asked their members to co-operate in the drawing up of legislation designed to develop this country and to protect the Canadian people adequately against detrimental measures and, as far as we are concerned, we intend to discharge that responsibility.

Opposition parties have their part to play and they have played it since the beginning of confederation. Now, the procedure which it is intended to apply at this time is precisely aimed at abolishing the role of the opposition.

Last December, on the eve of the adjournment for the Christmas holiday, the government brought in, after consideration in committee, rule 16A which is quite similar to the one we are being asked to pass today.

I should like to congratulate the committee which did a very fine job of considering the standing orders and the procedure of the house. I had the opportunity to attend two or three of its meetings and I found out by myself that the proposals made by any committee member were considered with great impartiality and willingness.

However, at the very end, a few members of that committee brought in that famous rule 16A which had the effect of taking the other members by surprise and the committee introduced it as such.

Because of the determination of the opposition against that rule 16A, the government retreated thinking at first that the members opposite would be anxious to leave for the Christmas holidays. The government thought that it could have that amendment passed quickly. However, it was mistaken and had to retreat.

The same thing occurred in June. After having re-established that committee and reconsidered the new standing orders and procedure of the house, at the very last moment, the government through members of the government moved concurrence in rule