

*Conduct of House Business*

Minister of Justice wondered whether he had better laugh over it and the Minister of Transport was saying he would inquire, but was not aware of the fact—he would declare the motion out of order because the matter was not urgent nor important. And at that moment the member would not even have any right of appeal from the decision of the Speaker. You will agree, Mr. Chairman, that this would deprive some members of the rights and privileges they enjoyed previously and they intend today to keep jealously.

Let us take another example. It is obvious that if the Speaker were a member for the Island of Montreal or Quebec City and if someone proposed the adjournment of the House to discuss a matter concerning western wheat, he would consider that question less important and less urgent than if he were a member for western Canada. One would render a decision that would undoubtedly be different from the decision made by a member coming from another area. And despite these differences as regards circumstances, time and place, we would have no right to appeal from the decisions of the Speaker.

For these reasons, Mr. Chairman, I intend to move an amendment to paragraph 2 of resolution No. 15.

However, I should like to make a few remarks concerning other problems. I believe this is in order—inasmuch as this was permitted with respect to motion No. 14—concerning other amendments moved to resolution No. 15.

For instance, in paragraph 2 of the resolution, it is suggested to abolish the right of appeal when the House sits as such. In paragraph 9, it is proposed to remove the right of appeal when members sit in committee of the whole House, which means that members will be deprived of the right they had in committee of the whole and in the House. The object of paragraph 9 is the same: to deprive the members of a right they already possess to appeal from the decisions of the chairman of the committee of the whole House. Indeed, the decision will be left to the Speaker and it will be final and without appeal.

We are also opposed to paragraph 9 which is similar to paragraph 2.

Mr. Chairman, we also object to two other points because they would restrict certain rights of splinter group members. Among other things, paragraph 1 provides that under standing order 6 (2), ten members would have to object to extending a sitting beyond the period of adjournment. Formerly, only one

member needed to rise; now, ten would have to do so.

Mr. Chairman, for the two old-line parties, which have more members, that would of course be easier. But take, for instance, the case of the Ralliement Cr ditiste; if, one evening, one member of our group was delegated to the United Nations, a second to NATO, a third to the annual meeting of the International Parliamentary Union and a fourth to the Parliamentary Association of the Commonwealth, it would mean that four of our members would be away on duty or on official business. Then, the Ralliement Cr ditiste would only have nine members in the house. Our party is officially recognized and has all the privileges of a recognized party. But then, we could not invoke the new standing order 6(2) proposed in paragraph 1 of Order No. 15. Mr. Chairman, you will readily agree that it does not make sense to deprive of that right political parties officially recognized in the house.

According to paragraph (3), since the new rule provides that we are going to sit from six to eight o'clock in the evening, should we wish to prevent a vote from taking place during that period, as it will be dinner time, there should be at least five members from the party in the house. As far as our party is concerned, should one of our members be ill and two others be at official meetings, this means there would be ten left and that some of them would not be able to leave for dinner or would have to do it in a hurry, and the hours of sitting will be quite long. Here again we would be deprived of our rights, since we could be prevented from objecting to a vote during these two hours. While those rights are granted to the two old parties, they are practically denied to the small parties.

Mr. Chairman, we object to these four proposed changes to the standing rules of the house. We believe—and we already said so—that the standing rules of the house need improvement. We do not think it is so much the standing rules that were deficient during the last three years, as the unhealthy atmosphere that prevailed.

In any event, we believe that the Standing Orders must be changed but in so doing we must respect the rights and privileges of each individual. Some of the amendments brought forward this evening do not safeguard the rights and privileges of each and every member.