

*Procedure and Organization*

proceed with his motion and so we are dealing with this matter in what in my view is the proper way.

I am completely opposed to this committee report. I will do everything I can to see that it is not adopted, and certainly to see, at least, that 75c is deleted. I support the amendment moved by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin), and my colleagues and I will vote for it, but I repeat that I am glad we are dealing with the report properly under the rules of the house.

Hon. members, are aware of what has brought us to this point. They know that last summer there were discussions as to the possibility of some time allocation rule. We could not reach agreement at the beginning of the session, and so the matter was referred to a Special Committee on Procedure of the House of Commons. That committee brought in its famous report of last December which resulted in a package of new rules being adopted, but not 16A.

Hon. members will recall that that subject was referred to the incoming Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization, and that it is the report of that committee, supported only by the majority on the committee, that we have before us at the present time. So the issue through all of this is whether or not we have the wit to find some way to allocate the time of the house on the basis of consultation, on the basis of consensus, or whether the allocation of the time of the house is to be done at the dictation of the government. That was the issue all last fall; that was the issue in December over 16A; that is the issue now.

I still take my stand in favour of planning the use of our time, in favour of allocating the time of the House of Commons, but I take my stand firmly with that being done on the basis of consultation, with that being done on the basis of participatory democracy, on the basis of all parties in this house being involved, and not on the basis of unilateral dictation from the government side. But, Mr. Speaker, that is precisely what we have in 75c, a proposal under which the allocating of the time of the house to debate is completely in the hands of the government house leader, supported by his government majority.

The hon. member for Grenville-Carleton devoted a few paragraphs in his speech to a description of proposed rules, 75A, 75B and 75c, and in the first part of that description he said things with which I do not quarrel.

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

But as he went along he did say things to which I take very strong exception.

I believe we have already straightened out the mistake he made when he said—and I trust *Hansard* will bear out what he said—that under 75c there would have to be a minimum of ten days of debate on any individual bill. Later he corrected that to say there had to be a lapse of time of not less than ten days. That is correct, Mr. Speaker; but as far as debate is concerned the fact of the matter is that under 75c a bill—any bill—can be put through the House of Commons with only four days of debate—one day on second reading, one day in committee whether it is committee of the whole or a standing committee, one day on the report stage, no matter how many amendments there might be on the order paper, and one day on the third reading.

If one takes into account that under our new rules most of our bills go to a standing committee and there are only three stages on the floor of the House of Commons, this means that under 75c every bill brought before parliament, except those very few bills dealt with in committee of the whole, could be put through parliament with only three days of debate on the floor of the house.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that there is no point in talking about an elapsed time of ten days. As the hon. member for Peace River has already pointed out, there is need in our kind of political democracy for public reaction, for people to know what is going on, for time for them to respond, and I suggest this needs more than ten days from the introduction of an important measure until it is finally passed.

But even though the ten days are there, and even though that is not enough time for public reaction, the harm of this rule is that it makes it possible for debate on bills that have only three stages on the floor of the house to be limited to three days of debate in the Canadian House of Commons. Mr. Speaker, that is not good enough; and I suggest we on this side of the house are doing a service to democracy, to parliament and to the people of Canada in resisting this with all the power that we have, in the hope that, just as on previous occasions majority governments have seen the light, so in this case the government will come to its senses and permit 75c to be taken out of this proposed new set of rules.

The hon. member for Grenville-Carleton says that 75c does not come into play until