

*Procedure and Organization*

debate to be limited on a particular item. I estimate that it could take 11 days from first reading to third reading. It could take 11 days to put a bill through. But as I read the rule, in those 11 days there would be three days of debate on the subject which would be assured. Those days would be the fourth day on which there would be one day allotted on second reading, one day which would be day 10 allotted on the report stage and one day which would be day 11 on the third reading stage. Those are the three days which would be provided for debate on any of the legislation which is so important and so earthshaking that the government wants to put it through without the public finding out what is going on.

The only reason the government wants this provision is so that it will be able to get legislation through which it feels the public will not like. They do not mind stretching out the time spent on bills which they feel are popular. The back-benchers on the government side can get up and talk about the good legislation. It is the bad legislation which the government wants to ram through. It is our business to stop that and we must. There might be a day at the committee stage. A day is allotted but no one knows what might happen in the committee. So we may have three or four days on which there will be debate on a bill on which closure has been used under rule 75c.

There are some immutable laws in this parliament. They are immutable because no matter how many governments try to override them the attempt is never successful. If they are overridden it is only for a short period of time. One immutable law is that there must be co-operation and negotiation on both sides of the house in order to accomplish anything at all. There must be co-operation. Things cannot be done by closure. There is a second one. Undertakings and understandings cannot be broken without adverse consequences. These are the rules I would commend to members on the government side who may feel that perhaps the opposition is dragging its feet.

● (5:20 p.m.)

It is impossible to put through legislation immediately if the opposition does not want it to go through. Remember this because it is immutable. If you do not find a loophole in one place you can find one in another. This is where the government is making its greatest mistake, in trying to force rule 75c on us. If it

does so against the wish of the opposition it may be assured it will not get any co-operation in respect of other legislation. I am not making a threat; I am merely stating the position of the house. This is a very difficult thing to define or envisage. One must be here a while to be able to recognize a mood. If the mood is bad it does not matter what rules the government may have; it will not get its legislation put through. This is why I urge the government to be reasonable.

The opposition has gone along with rule 75A and 75B with some hesitation, but 75c is much too strong for us to accept.

**Mr. Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys):** It is dictatorial.

**Mr. Aiken:** I should like to point out as an example to hon. members who have come to this house in the last year what can really happen when an opposition sets out to stop a legislative program. There was a legislative program on the order paper between the years 1958 and 1962. I was sitting on the opposite side of the house when the government had a majority of 208 members, yet there were four or five members sitting on this side on the front benches, all now departed from this place, who held up the legislative program and brought the government down at the expense of the country. This indicates how short our term here is, and I have in mind Messrs. Pearson, Pickersgill, Martin and Chevrier. They managed to hold up that legislative program.

I am not citing this as the most terrible example I have ever had the misfortune to sit and watch, but I do know this can happen and has happened in the past. I quote this example to show hon. members on the other side that it would be well to remember that an opposition has a duty to let pass in parliament what it considers valid and oppose legislation that it considers bad. This does not necessarily mean there are more members who agree with the legislation than disagree.

I have had the good fortune to sit on both sides of the house, and know that most of the government's legislation comes from within the depths of the government services. It comes to the ministers, then to cabinet and hon. members on the government side go along with it or complain. Occasionally they are successful in changing the legislation. The legislative program itself is not necessarily supported by a majority merely because it comes from that side of the house. It may be