

*Procedure and Organization*

Of course at this point we are not dealing with legislation but rather amendments to the rules of the house. But if I follow the hon. member's argument, it still is based on a constitutional point. I would think this is an argument which might be advanced by the hon. member or by other hon. members in the course of the debate, if they oppose the motion proposed by the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Blair). In the circumstances I do not think the point of order raised by the hon. member should be sustained.

• (2:50 p.m.)

**Mr. D. Gordon Blair (Grenville-Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, I feel there has been some advance billing in the presentation of this motion for concurrence. I wish to thank all hon. members who have expressed concern about the presentation of this motion, and those hon. members who have made the necessary procedural changes possible today so that it could be presented.

I believe that before I begin to describe the rules of procedure which are proposed I might be permitted to say a word about the work of the procedure committee. This is an extraordinary committee because it seems—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Blair:** —that its various reports made from time to time to the house have occasioned great controversy. This might suggest to hon. members, and indeed to the public, that the proceedings in the committee have carried on in a violent partisan and controversial fashion.

**Some hon. Members:** Shame.

**Mr. Blair:** I think that in fairness to my colleagues in the committee I should here state publicly that the proceedings of the committee have been marked at all times with cordiality and a sincere desire on the part of all hon. members of the committee to get ahead with its work. I am particularly grateful to the members of the committee for the consideration they have shown at all times to their chairman. I suggest that as we embark on this debate we should be under no misapprehension about the nature of the proceedings within the committee, and where we have perforce agreed to disagree we must also take into account that on many grave and important matters we have made recommendations to the house based upon agreement within the committee. I begin by referring to the order of reference which was

[Mr. Speaker.]

passed on December 20, 1968. This order reads:

That the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization be instructed, and hereby is instructed, to consider and to propose ways to allocate time to the legislative business of the house and to include in its report or reports a draft of a proposed standing order drawn to give effect, if adopted by the house, to the proposal of the committee; and for greater certainty but not to restrict the generality of the foregoing, the committee is instructed to consider the British rules and practice for the allocation of time, the suggestions made by the Leader of the Opposition on December 10, 1968, the suggestions made by the Minister of Agriculture on December 13, 1968, and other proposals and suggestions made in the debate on the motion for concurrence in the fourth report of the Special Committee on Procedure.

Pursuant to the direction given to the committee by the house, it devoted seven of its meetings during this term to the question of allocation of time. It considered a special report on allocation of time procedures in the British House of Commons, and at all times the committee had the benefit of the knowledge of several very experienced parliamentarians who were members of the committee.

As hon. members know, the committee's report to the house consists of three proposed standing orders. If it would help hon. members in following the remarks I am going to make on these proposed standing orders, they are set forth in full in *Votes and Proceedings* for June 20 of this year.

The first standing order proposed is 75A. This standing order contemplates a position where the leaders of all the parties in the house are in agreement as to the programming of legislation and the allocation of time to legislation at all stages. Where this result is obtained, a minister of the crown has the right to notify the house of the agreement which has been reached by unanimity, and thereupon the motion is put. In my submission, this is the answer to the argument raised by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin), because the final and ultimate decision as to an allocation of time is not made in any sense by private agreement by members of this house, but rather by a motion properly put and properly adopted in accordance with our usual rules.

The second rule is known as 75B. This contemplates a position where a majority of the party leaders agree on a proposal for the allocation of time. This means, for all practical purposes in this house, that three out of the four parties would agree on the proposal. Again, pursuant to such an agreement the motion is put by a minister of the Crown, but