

*Motion for Concurrence in Report*

I would put it to you, Mr. Speaker, and to hon. members that the words "adequate discussion" really are the point at issue. What is adequate discussion? I think this underlies the closing remarks of the government house leader today, and it pretty well underlies all the discussion we have heard to date. Now, the government may feel that anything beyond token debate or statements of position by representative speakers is more than enough. I suspect that this is the philosophy of this government in its determination to program the business of the house as it proposes in the present changes before the house.

Of course, government supporters are totally ignored in these proposals, notwithstanding the hopeful but regrettably naive assertion of the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton yesterday. Their position is totally ignored by the government. It will be affected just as much as that of hon. members opposite because I would put it to you, Mr. Speaker, that this is a move in the struggle between the cabinet and the house for the control of what is parliament. Every time there has been more than a mere tinkering with the rules, this has been the case.

Let us go back to 1955 when the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) was a member of this house. He will tell you—

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** When wasn't he a member?

**Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West):** From 1958 to 1962.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** I was in the gallery, watching.

**Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West):** He will agree that the changes in 1955 resulted in a considerable shift in favour of the cabinet against the rights of individual members and a further curtailment of debate. Now we get to the ultimate this afternoon when the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) indicated that he would like to recommend, and I am not telling tales out of school, that second reading last one day. It would not matter how controversial the bill; we could have a day. On his basis of thinking, a subject like medicare would be debated for one day.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** And the omnibus bill?

**Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West):** It is difficult to determine just what is the principle of

that bill, but certainly according to his thinking one day would be sufficient to debate the omnibus bill. What becomes then of the distribution of membership in this house? One cannot foresee that it may be fundamentally changed for some time. The position of the parties may be changed, but the point is that we are not making rules for just this year or next year. These are supposed to be permanent changes. What does that mean? Does it mean there will be merely position statements, one by a government spokesman, one from the opposition, one from the third party and one from the fourth party? If there were time left over we possibly could get in a few contributions more. Is that debate, Mr. Speaker? We might as well file these statements. Why does the government house leader even suggest we have second reading? As I have said, the government now feels that anything beyond a token debate or a statement of position by representative speakers is more than enough.

That power—I call it almost unbridled licence—given the government house leader by the proposed standing order 16A not only governs proceedings in this chamber but I warn hon. members opposite and emphasize to them that rule 16A reaches right down into committees. I do not know what the two hour debate is going to do, if the government house leader makes a proposal that contains any number of items that are unacceptable to the house leaders of other parties. In other words, the proposals could be outrageous, and designedly so if I want to ascribe to him the ultimate motive, not only with regard to several items of legislation but every item before the committees. We are to have a two hour debate to discuss the pros and cons and then there would be a guillotine, a vote presumably supported by the government members. This is how the business of this house is to be conducted. I call it unbridled licence; it is nothing more than that.

Hon. members must realize just what they are doing, the power they are turning over to the cabinet against themselves by their acceptance of this particular proposal. I think my proposals to the committee went even further with regard to the legislative process for discussion and flexibility by the government. Personally, I prefer the French system of giving notice on the order paper, printing the bill, and the bill going immediately to a standing committee, or to committee of the whole if that is to be its fate, where the bill is to be discussed. Then if any amendments are made either from the government side or