

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. When the unanimous consent of the House is involved I have no more right than anybody else in the chamber but I understood, as did the House Leader, that there was general agreement within this chamber for the right hon. gentleman to continue.

The Chairman: Order, please. The Chair must follow Standing Orders. I put the question twice, and certainly I have no discretion. The Standing Order says there must be consent, and there was not unanimous consent. On the point of order raised by the hon. member for Cape Breton-East Richmond, the Chair heard the negative opinion from within the chamber.

Mr. Diefenbaker: That is right.

Some hon. Members: Shame, shame!

An hon. Member: They don't like the truth.

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Chairman, I think it is unfortunate that some members on the government side were not prepared to give unanimous consent to allow the right hon. member for Prince Albert to complete his remarks. He has long experience in this House and we are discussing a very important matter.

An hon. Member: Same old gang!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Douglas: I think, instead of trying to cut off the discussion, some members on the other side of the House ought to be seized of the importance of this question and should be trying to get all the information they can on it. I submit to the gentlemen opposite that this section which we are now discussing, part IV of this Bill C-207, is one of the most crucial questions we will discuss in this session of Parliament.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Douglas: I would have hoped that private members on the other side of the House would not only have wanted to listen to the right hon. member for Prince Albert but would have wanted to take a—

Mr. Drury: A point of order, Mr. Chairman. On a number of occasions the hon. gentleman who has just been speaking has made reference to the opposition of gentlemen on this side of the House to allowing the right hon. member for Prince Albert to continue his speech. This is an unsupported and unsubstantiated charge,—

Some hon. Members: No, no!

An hon. Member: You are reflecting on the Chair; apologize.

Mr. Drury:—and I would hope that the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands would limit his observations to the lack of unanimity, without trying in a substantial way to ascribe it either to one side of the House or the other.

Government Organization Act, 1970

Mr. Douglas: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, if the President of the Treasury Board thinks there is any doubt as to where the opposition to allowing the right hon. member for Prince Albert to proceed came from, then I suggest that you should poll the committee. There will then be no doubt about the place from which the opposition came.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Douglas: I have the floor and I am still on a point of order. The President of the Treasury Board may run the government, but he is not going to start running this committee.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (3:30 p.m.)

The Chairman: Order, please. Will the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands kindly resume his seat. I merely want to ask whether he is still speaking on the point of order raised by the President of the Treasury Board?

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Chairman, since the right hon. member for Prince Albert may wish to speak, and since I have spoken for several minutes, I am prepared to surrender the floor to him and to take part in the debate later.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Drury: Mr. Chairman, I suggest that members on this side are fully agreeable to confirming your understanding by polling the chamber.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

The Chairman: Order, please. The Chair, with respect, must say to the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands and to the President of the Treasury Board that the Chair takes the position we must follow the Standing Orders. I indicated to hon. members, when a question was raised on the point of order, that I heard a negative voice after I had asked for unanimous consent. I did not indicate from what part of the chamber I heard it, and I am not now prepared to indicate that. I merely indicated that there was not unanimous consent and I am not prepared, because so far as I know there is no provision for this in the Standing Orders, to poll the committee. The hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands.

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Chairman, if the right hon. member for Prince Albert does not want to proceed at this time, he will without a doubt, take the opportunity to intervene later in the debate. I want to say that this provision for the establishment of ministries of state is a further erosion of the powers of Parliament.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Absolutely.

Mr. Douglas: Here is a provision which says—