

Motion for Concurrence in Report

cleanliness on a Monday morning, and at least in that respect he gave me the benefit of the doubt.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre raised a question which, as he said, was discussed in the committee and which was central to the special committee's conclusions in respect of amendments to the standing order, which should take a permanent form. He suggested that the standing orders as we may finally put them during the debate on this resolution, should receive scrutiny within the period of the next year. I would be glad to give an undertaking on behalf of the government that after we have had experience with these suggested standing orders for the balance of this session, we would at the commencement of the next session in September or October of next year, be prepared to refer these amendments to the new committee on procedure and organization, which I trust will be established by this motion. That committee could consider these procedural changes if not within one year, within at least nine months later.

The two questions upon which the debate so far has focused have been, first, questions in respect of supply and, perhaps more particularly, in respect of the proposed standing order 16-A. The question of supply was referred to at some length by the Leader of the Opposition. After what has been said on this point in the house; on the question of supply, I think little more need be said. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) rather abruptly, albeit gently, pulled out the rug from under the Leader of the Opposition in indicating that his group favour a change in the length of the supply procedures. I must say that the hon. gentleman representing Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) may be said to have pulled the rug from under the Leader of the Opposition in his support, along with other members of his party, of the fifth report of the last session which recommended that estimates should be referred to committee.

Mr. Baldwin: Subject to the caveats I referred to.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Subject to the caveats to which you referred, which do not seem to have been reproduced with the recommendations in respect of supply.

Mr. Baldwin: You have not read in the right places.

[Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): The hon. member for Peace River has now changed his mind on this question and I agree that is his right. It seems to us that we should continue to be persuaded by what formerly persuaded him.

A question has been raised both by the amendment of the Leader of the Opposition and, secondly by remarks made to me by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre—one could say privately, but also on television and repeated in his speech this evening—as to certain methods by which the proposed standing order 16A may be amended. I may say, as the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has already said, we are open to suggestions for amendments to this proposed standing order.

I think it is fair to comment that it would have been more reasonable to have looked for and expected these suggestions to be made at the special committee itself when it was considering the proposed standing order. One wonders why the suggestions were not forthcoming then, and in fact why there was not negotiation in respect of this particular proposal similar to the negotiation the hon. member is now proposing.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): It was made on a take it or leave it basis.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): The hon. member suggests we gave it to them on a take it or leave it basis. We were hardly presenting it on that basis in light of the fact he did not appear to be intimidated by most of the discussions, and I am surprised that he appears to be intimidated now.

Mr. Baldwin: You can't negotiate with a bulldozer.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): The special committee report would indicate that you have done pretty well on the whole.

I should like to emphasize the fact that there has been very considerable reference by speakers opposite, statesmen as they are, with respect to co-operation and respect for the parliamentary institution they so often put before us, to the fact that there will never be any need for the government or anybody else to take any particular action to arrive at an agreement as to a timetable, and that everything will from now on fall into place. I think they are just trying to put us on.

We are in politics and they too are in politics. This notion that political parties will never seek to prolong the debate on a particular matter is a trifle disingenuous. We are