

Procedure and Organization

in addition the debate will have to have started on the particular stage before the rule may be invoked.

An hon. Member: For how long?

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Speaker, would the minister answer a question? I put the same question to him that I put to the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton this afternoon, in reply to which he said that the debate under the rules would last ten days as a minimum. Does the minister go along with that or was the hon. member somewhat exaggerating?

Mr. Blair: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I checked what I said in reply to the hon. member's question and *Hansard* will show I said there will be an elapsed time.

Mr. Peters: Did you change the blues?

Mr. Blair: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters) has made a completely and unworthy parliamentary suggestion. I made no alteration. I tell the house now I was not speaking from a prepared text and my first formulation, as the hon. member has said, was different from the second.

Mr. Woolliams: You made a correction.

Mr. Blair: In answer to the question, I make no correction because I gave the correct answer.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): I think I actually have the floor, Mr. Speaker, and should be allowed to continue.

Mr. Woolliams: Would the minister answer the question?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Actually it may have been before the hon. member came back in the house, but I indicated what I was talking about was the lapsing of a period of time. I did not say there would be a minimum of ten days debate. I indicated that with the period of time customarily taken at the committee stage it may be closer to a month than a minimum of ten days.

Mr. Woolliams: What do you say is the minimum under the rule?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): My experience in dealing with major legislation in the house—

Mr. Woolliams: Just answer the question.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): I will answer it if the hon. member will be patient. The

anticipated experience is about a month's elapsed time.

Some hon. Members: No, no.

Mr. Woolliams: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I say nicely to the minister that I hope he would not mislead either the house or the communications media. I have asked a point-blank question. Surely the minister can tell us the minimum number of days that would be involved if the rule were implemented. I do not mean his experience. I mean under the rule as it is drafted.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): I must say I do not think I should have to repeat the remarks I made when the hon. member was not in the chamber.

Mr. Bell: He did not say anything.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): In respect of bills which have been referred to the standing committee our experience has been that a period of two or three weeks has been involved and even the report from the committee stage has a minimum of a two day delay before it can be taken up again. It would be difficult to use the procedure in a shorter period than one month's elapsed time.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, surely this is a deliberate attempt to mislead the house. The minister knows perfectly well that the time in which a matter may be before a committee can be limited to one day. We are not talking about anticipated time or past experience—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Order, please. I want to point out to the hon. member that there is no point of order; this is debate.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, it is rather interesting that an hon. member who apparently can be very indignant about the rights of others to speak should interfere with my right to speak. I point out to the hon. member for the third time that the proceedings of the committees of this house in respect of a major bill can take two to three weeks and that the report cannot be dealt with again for a period of 48 hours.

An hon. Member: It sounds like an auctioneer.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): That is right. What we are involved with here, after all, is a mathematical calculation involving the number of bills to be dealt with in the course