

Procedure and Organization

Surely 155 seats out of 264 is sufficient for this majority government to handle parliament in a businesslike manner. It can always impose closure—after sufficient debate.

This government does not need the right to cut off debate in advance in order to give the people of our country the just society it has promised. Reconsider, Mr. Prime Minister. Especially in view of the popular opposition to your proposal.

Take the section dealing with your right to cut off debate in advance out of your reform book.

And make no further attempts to arbitrarily impose your government's will on parliament.

This letter from CHUM indicates why we oppose the granting of this naked power the government wants. We have heard much talk about the experience of the United Kingdom, and the President of the Privy Council has risen on many occasions to ask members whether they are knowledgeable of the experience of England and the fact that the allocation of time there is far more strict and stringent. Let me remind the President of the Privy Council of the differences which prevail in the United Kingdom. There are differences in numbers of members, differences in respect of independent chairmen, differences in attitude and differences in tradition. There is nothing wrong with studying the views and procedures as well as the rules of other governments, but you only apply those rules which have relevance to Canada.

The hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Blair), who is chairman of the committee, attempted to bring forth a spirit of co-operation not only in the committee but in the house. He indicated the experience in the United Kingdom, as recorded in *Hansard* for July 8 at page 10958:

It is estimated that 50 per cent of the business of the House of Commons in the United Kingdom proceeds in accordance with an agreed timetable; that 25 per cent is so uncontentious that it requires the application of no timetable and that of the balance of 25 per cent deemed to be contentious, the majority or a substantial part, is dealt with through the ordinary process of negotiation, with the result that orders allocating time are not the procedures which are usually or habitually employed at Westminster.

We have the statement by the President of the Privy Council that 75c would probably be applied to no more than one per cent of the legislation. Further than that, we have the experience during this session with the passing of the omnibus Criminal Code and languages bills. The only bill the government singles out is the omnibus bill, and it unfairly and unjustly points that finger of guilt at members of the Creditiste party who exercised their right in respect of certain sections. As a member previously said, when you think

[Mr. Gilbert.]

of the many sections and subjects dealt with in the omnibus bill in respect of criminal law you can appreciate the necessity of debating time. One should also appreciate the necessity of members reflecting the views of their constituents in respect of these important subjects.

When one looks at the languages bill one will find there was little criticism, yet that bill is a milestone in respect of bringing forth unity in Canada. Therefore, the debate which took place was both proper and in order. When one thinks of the necessity for 75c during the next session, one can only envisage it being applied to certain matters. It may be applied in respect of the problems of foreign ownership. Suppose we do have a limit introduced in a respect of the Canada Development Corporation. Surely, no hon. member would suggest that we should debate it on the basis of 75c, only allowing about four days for this very complex and important subject.

I felt rather sorry for the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton when he made a slip in respect of the ten days of debate rather than the ten days lapse of time. It was only after persuasion by members of the opposition that he corrected himself and said that what he was referring to was the ten days lapse of time. I have heard different members on the government side mention different times. One referred to 30 days and another to two months, as the time period before a bill might be passed.

An hon. Member: Thirteen sitting days.

Mr. Gilbert: An hon. member suggest 13 sitting days. When you start establishing time limits in respect of important matters you will have an indication of the lack of spirit, good will and co-operation which should prevail among members of the house in connection with debates on these important matters.

When I think of the time limits that may be imposed in respect of taxation changes which have been alluded to, it makes me realize that it is only by a spirit of co-operation that this matter can be properly aired. When I think of the possible new mini-bill the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) may bring forward containing further amendments to the Criminal Code, I cannot believe that problems in respect of bail, the expunging of criminal records and corporal punishment can be properly debated with the time limit changes the government has suggested.