

*Conduct of House Business*

promise in order to get out of the bad situation in which he found himself.

At any rate, Mr. Chairman, as the first speaker and official critic of the opposition regarding resolution No. 15, I wish to point out this resolution raises many problems and some provisions should be amended, more particularly those of paragraph 2 tending to do away with the right of appeal from the Speaker's rulings.

After all, to appeal against a Speaker's ruling does not necessarily mean that the Speaker was wrong and that he made a mistake although some hon. members in certain cases can disagree with the Speaker, this enables most members to give their opinion or make their point in spite of the Speaker's ruling.

In fact, in most cases, the Speaker's rulings are upheld and then it is not prejudicial to the prestige and authority of the Speaker, because the hon. members have generally approved and upheld the Speaker's ruling. But in the exceptional cases where the Speaker's ruling is reversed, it would be advisable then to maintain the right to appeal against the Speaker's ruling, because in those cases, most members will have had the opportunity to air their opinions.

This happened once in three years when the tables were turned, that is, when the Conservatives were in power and the Liberals in the opposition. If I remember well, it was at the end of January or at the beginning of February 1963. At that time it was the present Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Martin) who had appealed against a ruling of the Speaker, which was reversed. A few days later we were able to get rid of the then Conservative government.

In addition, I do not remember that any of the Liberal members then in the opposition complained against the right of the members to appeal against a ruling of the Speaker. On the contrary, they did it themselves on several occasions when they were in the opposition. They even did it successfully since they managed to overrule the Speaker, thus causing the government to fall three or four days later.

At that time Liberal members were quite happy about it, they were even delighted to see that a standing order allowed them to appeal the Speaker's ruling. In fact, not one of them complained then that under our standing orders, the house was ruled by the majority of its members.

[Mr. Grégoire.]

• (9:10 p.m.)

That is the first reason why I think appeals from the Speaker's rulings must not be done away with.

There are other reasons. For instance, if the right of appeal from a ruling given by the Speaker is abolished, a member of the house who moves an amendment or a sub-amendment which is found unacceptable, although he prepared it conscientiously and honestly with the help of other members, thinking that the said amendment or sub-amendment complies with all the rules of the house, will have no recourse against a simple decision which quite often is not taken by the Speaker himself but by officials of the House of Commons who sit around him.

As a matter of fact, it is not the Speaker himself who decides but advisers who have not been elected and do not sit as members of the House of Commons but help the Speaker. Quite often, these rulings are made by his advisers and the Speaker has only to render the decision they suggested to him. Thus, members who have conscientiously and honestly prepared amendments or subamendments will see their rights to move them denied, because they are called out of order. And, at that very moment they are unable to appeal from the Speaker's decision, a decision that quite often has been suggested to him by his advisers. I suggest this is unfair to the Members of Parliament.

There is also another argument; the Speaker sits in the house during a term of office, from one session to another, from one government to the other, and he is not considered a permanent Speaker, but a Speaker who comes from the ranks of a political party and whose general principle is to maintain, as often as possible, the government's decisions. He may see the problems in a different light, according to circumstances.

For instance, if there were at present in the Chair a member from Abitibi or Lac-Saint-Jean and another member moved the adjournment of the House to discuss the problem of rain-making machinery in such areas, you may be sure that for a Speaker from such areas, the problem would be extremely urgent and important, having precedence over wheat problems and industrial matters, and he would immediately allow such an urgent debate. But if the Speaker came from another area and had never heard about rain-making machinery—such was the case the first time we mentioned this problem—the Minister of National Health and Welfare had never heard about it—while the