

Procedure and Organization

For this reason, Mr. Speaker, I move the following amendment:

That the third report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization be referred back to the committee, with instructions to amend it by deleting therefrom proposed standing order 75c.

I must apologize, Mr. Speaker, for not having other copies. I was not expecting the withdrawal of the motion by the government. I had other motions ready in case we were proceeding with the motion of the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald).

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I wish to extend my congratulations to the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Blair) on being given the green light to proceed with his motion today. He may feel we have been hard on him during the last few days. He does not know what we had planned to say today, but may I assure him we have felt great sympathy for him in having to sit there without moving the motion he had been instructed to present to the house.

Mr. Blair: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Fairweather: Have you got permission to speak?

Mr. Blair: That remark is unworthy of the hon. member for Fundy-Royal. On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make clear to the house that there had been an orderly disposition of the proceedings disclosed by the President of the Privy Council some time ago, that encompassed the idea that the public business would be transacted before the procedural matters with which we are now dealing. When that public business was concluded last night, I think prematurely, I was unable to proceed. I resist the idea of any suggestion that I have been derelict in my duty.

Mr. Hees: You don't have to explain; we know.

Mr. Ricard: You are only making it worse.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): We will let the record speak for itself, Mr. Speaker. I agree with the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton when he says that in our Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization, at least to a certain point, we had very satisfactory sittings. We dealt with a great deal of work, and produced a number of reports which I think will bear fruit in the future in terms of improving the work of parliament. I would express the hope, too,

that when tempers cool over this matter more study will be given to some of the other recommendations we have made. As a matter of fact our deliberations were quite friendly, quite productive and very enjoyable, except for the last two sessions before the third report was presented to the house on June 20.

• (3:50 p.m.)

What was wrong with those last two sessions? I say to my hon. friend from Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Blair) that I take issue with a statement he made toward the end of his speech, and in taking issue with it I indicate what was wrong with those last two sessions. In his concluding paragraph he said he hoped that what parliament was now going to do would not violate the ancient traditions and procedures of this house. Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what is happening. The ancient traditions and procedures of this house with respect to its rules are being violated. The tradition that the rules belong to all members of the house, that they belong to parliament, is being violated by a proposal that the rules be written the way the government wants them written.

That, Mr. Speaker, is what was wrong with the last two sittings of our committee before the third report was presented to the house. All the harmony and amity we had went out the window, as we were told what the government was insisting on putting through and, as has already been made clear, the decision to put 75c before the house was on a vote of six to three, the six being Liberal members of the committee and the three being representatives of the opposition parties.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is much that one could say, but there are only 40 minutes in which to say it, so I had better not waste too much time congratulating people, especially if that produces points of order. But I must say to you, sir, who found it rather strange that I resisted your invitation to continue the debate on the point of order we were making last night, that I found it rather strange myself; but the answer is that I was quite satisfied that the point we made last night got home, namely that it was proper for the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton to move concurrence in the third report of the committee but it was not proper for the government to move the motion that was in the name of the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald). Whether the President of the Privy Council agrees with that or not, he has decided not to,