

*Procedure and Organization*

But the proposed rule 75c is something more than procedural; it is fundamental. The discussion that has been evoked in this debate has indicated clearly that we are not just arguing about form but about substance. Certain people in this house, such as the Prime Minister, have scorned this debate. Some of the press representatives are sadly unaware of what it is all about and spend more time in measuring the length of debate than in appraising what is being debated. This is one of the most serious and fundamental subjects that could be discussed in these torrid July days.

In parliamentary debates and in politics generally, I suppose we do not need much encouragement when it comes to the art of dramatization. Perhaps we are inclined to hyperbole, and certainly understatement is not the most outstanding attribute of the politician. But this debate is not one that needs the art of the dramatist. Exaggeration for emphasis is not necessary. The subject itself is sufficiently serious as to require no adornment, no additional or external calls for urgency.

What we, the people's representatives, are dealing with today could mark a great watershed between a parliament which, with all its imperfections, was and is a meaningful instrument of democratic action and something that is much less valuable, much less significant and much less expressive of the popular will. As I say, we are dealing today not with the routine, but rather with the essence of parliament. We would be less than true to the spirit of parliamentary democracy, that precious but sometimes frail product of centuries of human achievement, if we did otherwise.

We should remind ourselves always that popular democracy is not an easy or a natural human development. It has not flourished universally. Indeed, it has often failed and faltered. Men of wisdom and perception like Abraham Lincoln, and Wilfrid Laurier after him, have warned that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty". Especially has this been so in reference to political liberty. So, it is well that hon. members are sensing that there is great danger in what is being imposed; there is great danger in this seemingly innocuous rule 75c.

• (12:20 p.m.)

Before coming to this chamber I spent a good many years perusing *Hansard* and other parliamentary papers. It is my view that, in general, the speeches of hon. members in this

[Mr. Macquarrie.]

debate have so far been of very high quality. I am not particularly referring to speeches made today. Speeches in this debate have been thoughtful, perceptive and, in the main, they have been utterances of men who realize that what is happening is very serious in the evolution of our parliamentary system. This is not just another debate, not just another argument, not just another confrontation between parties.

**An hon. Member:** It is not just a stupid filibuster.

**Mr. Macquarrie:** I am not one who is given to criticizing the C.B.C. or the media generally—not that silence is to be taken as enthusiastic endorsement. Nevertheless, in this vital phase of parliamentary deliberations I think the free press has generally failed, and there are important exceptions to this, to realize that without a free parliament there will be scant room or scope for a free press.

I must confess to being an avid C.B.C. listener and I report with sadness, Mr. Speaker, that little has come from the many representatives of the *cognoscenti* whose views it airs concerning the true inwardness of the situation confronting the House of Commons of Canada today. I believe in this respect—and I do not know whether the weather has had anything to do with it—the press has been less alert to the dangers at hand than was the case with rule 16A last December. I agree with my friend the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave), that Frankenstein is still Frankenstein and his monster is still the monster.

There are important exceptions to the general run of press coverage, and my hon. friend, the hon. member for St. Hyacinthe (Mr. Ricard), mentioned some of them. It is significant that one man who knew at first hand the tyranny of a political system which banished free institutions should be in the forefront of those who see the dangers lurking in this current effort on the part of the government. Lubor Zink, with whom I do not always agree, has from the first syllables uttered in this debate given this issue the emphasis it properly deserves. I congratulate him and salute his perceptiveness. I salute him and others like him who are fully awake to the importance of this debate. I say that they are acting in their own interests, in the interests of the fourth estate, when they direct attention to the importance of what is going on.

Some time before we had a parliament in Canada there was another newspaperman