

Debating Time Allotment

time rule. All of the good work done on the other items was allowed to go into limbo and will be allowed to die when this session dies. The sooner this session dies the better, in the light of the way it is progressing now.

Regardless of what the President of the Privy Council may or may not say, it is quite obvious that the only object in getting this report was to provide an opportunity to bring in the allocation of time measure. When the report did not appear to be identical with what the government wanted, it walked over that report and brought in its own motion.

Let me repeat briefly one point I made on July 2 when the issue was first raised. We are talking about a fundamental matter, and by that I mean a matter which goes to the basis of parliament. The House of Commons, when it is sitting, should be the master of the government, not the reverse. The house, not the government, set up the committee in question, asked it to consider various matters and report. This committee which the house set up proceeded to hold meetings. The committee voted on a majority report and presented it to the house. The orders of the house have been carried out and this report has been made. We now have that report on the order paper, and we are ready to proceed with it.

It is fundamental that if the House of Commons itself is to have priority and seniority in this country, the orders of the house should be followed and should have precedence over motions of the government. This involves a fundamental matter in respect of which Your Honour should make a determination. This does not involve just a matter of rules, but involves a matter of going beyond those rules to the basis of the power structure of this country.

Is the House of Commons the master of its own proceedings or can the government, by intervention, stall or stop these proceedings? This is a fundamental question which must be considered and decided in favour of the House of Commons. If it is not, then we have moved into the second stage of deterioration of the power of the people.

The first stage of this deterioration was when this report was brought forward by means of a government majority. I do not claim long experience but I have been here over 12 years, and for the last 7 or 8 years a member of most of the procedural committees set up under previous speakers. Each one of these committees brought forward a report. As a matter of fact the reports were

[Mr. Aiken.]

unanimous and were brought in with no dissenters. It was never considered that this house could properly function unless we were agreed at least upon our rules. For the second time during this new parliament, which the people elected in June of last year, a majority report has been brought in without the concurrence of opposition parties. This exemplifies the first breakdown in the procedures of the house.

For many years we have agreed that committees set up by this house should consider and bring in unanimous reports in respect of our rules. The present occasion is the first example of a breakdown in this regard, to my knowledge. The government, having broken the first rule, is now proceeding to break the second rule by walking over a committee report on the procedures of the house.

This is not the report of a standing committee but the report of a special committee set up for a special purpose. It is essential at this time that Your Honour give very serious thought to the fundamental questions being considered. You should not consider this as just a parliamentary procedural matter, but as a fundamental matter on which the future importance of parliament may very well depend.

If Your Honour decides against the proposition we on this side support, that may well lead to a series of breakdowns in parliament, which in turn could lead to greater disrepute of this house. This may be particularly true if the government is allowed to overwhelm us by putting forward a principle contrary to the basic rules of this house. This is not the type of ruling which would be useful to parliament in years to come.

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I suggest there is a very basic and fundamental matter before you if you accept suggestions made by members on the other side. The basic and fundamental matter is whether or not any motion on the order paper does, in fact, rule out or prohibit the government from introducing a motion on the same or essentially the same subject matter. Obviously that is not so, because we have dozens, in fact scores of motions, bills and that sort of thing on the order paper relating to matters in many ways almost the same or at least dealing with the same subject matters as government legislation introduced some time later.