

House of Commons Procedures

I should add that this was on the understanding that when we came to Order No. 15 we would bring forward an amendment that would provide that instead of half an hour for the question period on each day of the week there would be one day on which it would be one hour.

Mr. Diefenbaker: What day of the week would it be that the one hour would apply?

Mr. McIlraith: It was not finally decided at the meeting but we were talking about Friday.

Mr. Baldwin: Never on Sunday.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. McIlraith: Mr. Speaker, I think I am quite accurate in stating this and if any House Leader differs with my statement I should like him to say so. I think this is an accurate report on the agreement. There was the one exception of the hon. Member for Lapointe (Mr. Grégoire); as House Leader for his party he had another qualification he wanted to put in which we felt we could not accept, and I believe I am fair in saying that no other House Leader supported his reservation in that respect.

Some hon. Members: Question.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Grégoire (Lapointe): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the statement just made by the President of the Privy Council (Mr. McIlraith), I admit that we did not accept all the conditions suggested this afternoon for the following reason. Until now, nine changes have been made to motion No. 14 and four others have been suggested with regard to motion No. 15. Moreover, a compromise was reached after discussion between representatives of the two old line parties. We believe that it came about at the expense of the third parties and that it will be prejudicial to them, and we are opposed to it.

We asked for only one change since the beginning of this debate, to protect at least a shred of our rights and privileges, and it was rejected. It has to do with paragraph 2 of Order No. 14 relating more specifically to standing order 12 (2) which takes away a member's right to appeal a ruling by the Speaker in the case of an amendment, a sub-amendment or any other motion. We believe it goes much too far in trespassing on the rights of minor parties and, for that reason, we cannot accept this proposal, especially since the debate is due to end Friday.

[Mr. McIlraith.]

We do not know how much time the other parties will take to outline their problems and we want to have sufficient time to discuss our own, particularly one which we consider of prime importance. Moreover, we believe that standing order 15 stresses some very important points and we were ready to withdraw our own motion, so to speak, in an attempt at least to arrive at some agreement which would improve the business of the house. But since the Government refused to yield on any point and since we believe the object of the compromise arrived at by the two old line parties is to bully or eliminate the small parties—as indeed the Conservative party often gave us to understand—we protest against such a position and we declare that we cannot accept the conclusion of such an arrangement between the two old line parties.

[*English*]

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could put a question to the hon. gentleman. Does the hon. gentleman realize that no one is suggesting that the House should now accept No. 15 as it is? All we are suggesting is that we should debate it, and it would be quite open to the hon. gentleman, or indeed to any other hon. Member, to move an amendment to any part of order No. 15 when we undertake the debate on it, so that the rights of the hon. gentleman and all his colleagues, and indeed everyone else in the House, would be fully protected. We are merely seeking to get an agreement on procedure to deal with these matters. But it would not restrict in any way the right of the hon. Member to move to strike out that provision.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Speaker, in answer to the Minister of Transport's question, I must say that if we could reach this goal, we would agree with his proposal, but we must keep in mind that we have only two days left in which to debate resolution No. 15. Now, during these two days, it is quite possible that the Conservatives would move an amendment and that the debate be limited to this amendment during these two days.

Should the debate last less than two days, it may be that the New Democratic Party would move an amendment which would take up the whole two days allowed for the debate of the said motion. And even if, perchance, as d'Artagnan, in the *The Three Musketeers*, who said: "If, after I have killed the first three, I am still alive", if the first two