

Procedure and Organization

with a more independent and conciliatory point of view. And we should be sure that a real effort is made to achieve agreement. We do not want to take any chances on the President of the Privy Council calling some kind of meeting, saying that the leaders of the opposition parties cannot agree, and coming to the house immediately to announce that he cannot get agreement under 75B. What we should do is strengthen 75B and make it a useful instrument for the allocation of time in the house. Until we provide some safeguards there, we are not prepared to consider anything like 75c.

In other words, the house should send this report back. The house should accept the amendment of my hon. friend the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin). The leader of the house has not only made a fool of the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Blair) but of all the backbenchers on the other side, according to my interpretation of what is being done. In any event, placing 75c before the house with all its ambiguity, while there is a lack of proper safeguards in 75B, amounts to wasting everybody's time, including the house leader's. He had better agree now to send the report back to the committee. Let him accept the amendment and let us get on with the business of the country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. John M. Reid (Kenora-Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, I was very interested in the concluding remarks of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield), particularly those in connection with the motion standing in the name of the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald). I think the hon. gentleman unconsciously stumbled on the reason for the presentation of that motion. It was presented, of course, in order to clear up the ambiguity in 75B. If anybody wishes to compare the report presented by the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Blair) with the motion appearing in today's order paper, he will find there are two significant differences. The first is in rule 75B. I will read it as amended:

When a Minister of the Crown, from his place in the house, states that a majority of the representatives of the several parties, including that of the government, have come to an agreement in respect of a proposed allotment of days or hours for the proceedings at any stage of the passing of a private bill, he may propose a motion, without notice—

• (4:20 p.m.)

The significant change is "including that of the government". That would eliminate the

ambiguity to which the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) properly drew attention. The reason for it is that there is a difference of opinion between the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) and the members of the New Democratic party. For proof of that one need only go to *Hansard* for July 8, page 10965, and a question asked by the hon. member for Ottawa West (Mr. Francis) of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). The question is:

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the hon. member in respect of 75B whether he agrees with the submission of the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) that the representatives of the opposition parties could constitute a majority, not including the representative of the government party?

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I think that is a nice little point on which one could spend time and not have time to deal with other matters.

Then after one or two interruptions the hon. member went on:

If I could have the time to deal with it I would be quite happy to do so. I do not think the amendment the President of the Privy Council wanted to put into 75B was necessary at all. I think that the wording in 75B which says that the government house leader "may move a motion under 75B" does not require him to move it and therefore 75B does not operate unless one of the majority is the government representative. Concerning what would happen to 75c if it was argued that 75B had not been fully brought into play, that is one of the fine procedural arguments we could have if 75c comes into play. I suggest this is highly hypothetical because surely debate in this parliament is still effective, surely we are still concerned about the procedural rules of parliament, and before this is all over we will not have a 75c.

That was the hon. member's reply, and it is the reason the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) moved government order No. 99.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Reid: Yes.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): When he is discussing the wording of 75B, will he distinguish between the question whether 75B requires clarification for its own sake and what would happen when 75c is called? I quite agree with the view taken on the other side of the house that 75B does not need clarification for its own sake but, as I said the other day, the point raised by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) with regard to 75c is another matter.

Mr. Reid: My response to the hon. member is that I tend to the view that 75B for its own sake does not require further clarification. I