

*Procedure and Organization*

• (5:10 p.m.)

The very simple fact is that this is the place in which the public should participate. Fortunately we have young people in this parliament. There is no one under 21 years of age because that is where the line is drawn. But we have one who is 22 years of age and we have others who are in their twenties. These young people are here to participate. Will the government give them an opportunity to participate or will they be cut off?

I think the whole program that has been put forward by the government in respect of this rule which we are considering is not one that would permit reasonable parliamentary participation by the people of Canada. Fundamentally that is the reason we intend to stay here to oppose it. This is the only power an opposition has. We always lose. We lose every vote when it comes to a division. We might as well be somewhere else because it does not matter what I say, what the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas) or anybody else says.

We are not likely to change the opinion of any members opposite and even if we do we will not change their vote because they will support the government. So we lose every time there is a vote. The only defence the opposition has is to prevent a vote in cases where it is unjust to proceed with the legislation.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Aiken:** I hope we can prevent a vote by carrying on an orderly debate. I think we can do this because we have plenty to talk about. We have plenty of speakers and we have plenty of people in the opposition parties who feel there is a principle involved here which is being downgraded. I refer to the principle that parliament is a place where public opinion should be aired, where discussions should be held and where the public is informed through the medium of the press, radio and television so that they will know what is being said and can form their own conclusions.

On this particular point it was most discouraging last night for anyone who watched the C.B.C. news to find that there was no mention whatever of this debate.

**An hon. Member:** What—

**Mr. Aiken:** The hon. member for Sudbury (Mr. Jerome) or perhaps some other hon. member said—

**An hon. Member:** The hon. member for Vancouver Quadra (Mr. Deachman).

[Mr. Aiken.]

**Mr. Aiken:** If he said that, I think it is a disgrace—"What difference does it make; there is nothing worth talking about."

**Mr. Jerome:** Mr. Speaker, on a question of privilege, I believe the record will show I did not make any such remark and have not made any remarks since the hon. member began his speech.

**Mr. Aiken:** As my colleague said, perhaps it was the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra (Mr. Deachman). If it was not he then perhaps he could stand up and say so.

**Mr. Deachman:** I was not even listening to the hon. member.

**Mr. Aiken:** He generally talks without thinking anyway. In any case there is something here worth talking about. If the C.B.C. does not know this then they had better make some changes in their news broadcasting system because there is a principle involved here. The feature item last night was the resignation of the publicity director of the National Arts Centre. That was considered to be much more important than the fact that the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) backed down in his effort to bulldoze and overrule the Standing Committee on Procedure of this house to the point where parliament was being downgraded. Maybe there are people who do not think this is important. The hon. member for Sudbury (Mr. Jerome) did not seem to think it was. He seemed to think our main business is to get the program through. I do not know whether he said what the program is, but I can assure him that there is more involved than that. If the other news media can carry this particular debate as a matter of importance then the C.B.C. ought to wake up. I am not one of those who stand up daily to criticize the C.B.C. It has a tough job to do. I think, however, when a mistake has been made by the C.B.C. it should be pointed out. I think in this instance it has made a mistake. I am not suggesting they should report this speech, but there have been a few good ones today. I believe the C.B.C. could at least mention the fact that a good principle is being debated.

I should like to get down to the matter of rule 75c. There has been a good deal of discussion about what it really means. How many days of debate will be allowed if 75c becomes effective and how many days of elapsed time will be involved? I think this in a sense is an academic question because it is too short a time under any circumstances for