

*Procedure and Organization*

other side of the house say will ever change my mind in this respect. We can work together. We have proven that we can. We may have come off the track once in a while, but we can get back on it and forget about the little anger we have shown. We can work out a time allocation. A representative group of backbenchers can decide how best this can be done. This does not mean that the government will reach into the committee system. This point has not been dealt with very much in the debate. The fact is that a great many of my colleagues on the back benches are not the beautiful people of the House of Commons; we are not ministers, we are not parliamentary secretaries, we are not chairmen of committees, we are not deputies of this, that or the other.

**Mr. Alexander:** We are just the workers.

**Mr. McCleave:** We are the people who make parliament work. There are about 200 of us. We come from all parties and all provinces of Canada. I throw out this suggestion for the consideration of our important elders, the beautiful people to whom I have just referred. The opposition side should pick the three best committee people from the government side of the house. The government side should pick those they regard as the best three, four or five—whatever number is determined—people from the opposition side of the house. Those people should be given time to consider this problem. There should be consultation with everybody in the chamber. However, I believe this could be done in, say, two months.

The members chosen should be given time to work out some kind of formula for the conduct of committees. It should be a good formula so that anybody who feels himself, herself, or if an association, itself, aggrieved by legislation would at least have the opportunity to appear before us. This suggestion may offend those who think purism exists only in the House of Commons. I do not think it will offend those who believe the committee system is a very valuable part of the proceedings of this place.

This is the suggestion I make, Mr. Speaker. I make it in humility and because I believe that when committees are unfettered and allowed to reach a consensus they will go out and do the job required for the House of Commons.

• (3:10 p.m.)

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** Before the hon. member resumes his seat would he mind if I [Mr. McCleave.]

asked a question? His second point, as I gather it, is taken from the *Globe and Mail* editorial. I gather the position of the *Globe and Mail* is that 75c would be acceptable provided there is a minimum of one month's time with respect to any bill on the order paper. Is that what the hon. member is proposing to the house?

**Mr. McCleave:** Mr. Speaker, I confess that I did not read the *Globe and Mail* editorial as carefully as I should have, or as carefully as the President of the Privy Council appears to have read it. My second and third suggestions ought to be considered together. In some cases one month may be too long; on the other hand with bills like the Indian Act amendment one month might be far too little. The idea is that there must be enough time for us in parliament to inform the country what is happening and to enlighten public opinion. My approach to this matter, in a way of speaking, is the backbenchers' approach or the committee approach. Our opinions ought to be made known to the country. That is what I was trying to say.

**Hon. D. S. Harkness (Calgary Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I seldom take part in debates on the rules, usually being content to leave discussions on these matters to others who have become more or less experts on the subject. Some are experts on our complicated procedures and on the involved interpretations of rules as set out by Erskine, May, Beauchesne and others.

May I say in passing that I think part of the time which this measure is supposedly designed to save could be saved if less time were devoted to some of the more abstruse discussions on the rules which take place on occasion. Sometimes we may talk about the rules for several hours during any one week.

As has been pointed out by many in this debate, we can utilize many methods to save time in this house other than the one proposed by the government. In this case, however, we are not embarked on the usual kind of rules debate. This really is an effort by the government to emasculate parliament. It is an effort to take away from the representatives of the people in this chamber their right to discuss a government measure at sufficient length so that its weaknesses may be exposed and so that the general public may become aware of those weaknesses.

I think parliamentary histories and histories of countries demonstrate that only as a