

*War Veterans' Allowance Act*

rules would permit a parliamentary assistant to close the debate by virtue of the fact that he is speaking for the minister. I think you, Mr. Speaker, perhaps had your book open at the relevant page. In the Standing Orders of the House of Commons that we have here, at page 25 it is specifically stated as follows:

(2) A reply shall be allowed to a member who has moved a substantive motion, but not to the mover of an amendment, the previous question or an instruction to a committee.

(3) In all cases Mr. Speaker shall inform the house that the reply of the mover of the original motion closes the debate.

I have no objection to the parliamentary assistant speaking now and I have no objection that he be the last speaker. However, I would object to the rule being interpreted from now on that a parliamentary assistant, by virtue of the fact that he is taking the minister's place, automatically closes the debate.

**Mr. G. H. Castleden (Yorkton):** I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I would agree with the hon. member that the rule should not be changed and I do not think this should be taken as a precedent for establishing a rule. But I believe it is well known in the house that the house has power to conduct its own affairs; and if by unanimous consent the house allows such a thing, such a thing could happen at such time.

**Mr. Hansell:** That is different.

**Mr. Speaker:** I raised the issue which has subsequently been spoken to by the two hon. members because I did not want to create a precedent which would necessarily be binding in the future. The house has accepted this practice in the past. There is one instance of it in the debates, at page 2918 of *Hansard* of April 18, 1955, where the parliamentary assistant rose on behalf of the minister and the Speaker informed the house that he would close the debate. I think it is preferable, as suggested by the hon. member for Macleod and the hon. member for Yorkton, that the house understand that the rule does not cover the matter exactly and that we proceed by leave of the house at this time and not by way of precedent.

**Mr. W. G. Dinsdale (Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Veterans Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your generosity and the generosity of the house in making it possible for me to speak at the present time. I am fully aware, I assure you, that no precedent is being established here tonight. The reason I think that the minister has given me this opportunity is because of his desire to facilitate the passage of this important piece of legislation through the house

[Mr. Hansell.]

with a minimum of delay. When I expressed a desire to say a few words he suggested that might be done most opportunely in winding up the debate here this evening.

After listening to the various speakers who have made their presentations on this second reading, it is hardly necessary for me to speak at any considerable length. I am rather of the opinion expressed by my worthy friend, the hon. member for Selkirk (Mr. Bryce), who said yesterday, in a very short and terse statement typically Scottish, that it is good legislation; let us get on and get it passed. I agree with him wholeheartedly on that point. Others have since echoed the same sentiment as the hon. member for Selkirk.

Everyone has said that Canada has excellent veterans' legislation. The veterans' charter is second to none, I suppose, amongst all the countries of the world which make provision for those who have served in a special way in the various wars of this century. The reason for that, as has been stated, is that throughout the years, and particularly during the days of world war II, the veterans charter which we have and which we are amending by this legislation was designed by the veteran members of this house who had only one purpose in mind and that was to provide the best welfare program possible for their comrades.

We have had the advice, as has been mentioned, of the veterans organizations. We always acknowledge the contributions that they have made in formulating the charter. This is the first time I have spoken on these matters from this side of the house. I have spoken on these matters from the other side of the house during the past few years. I was glad that no one quoted the words I had uttered on former occasions.

**Mr. Tucker:** I could not quote them all.

**Mr. Stick:** They are not as important as all that.

**Mr. Dinsdale:** I do not know to what reason I should attribute that, but I have certainly not had my words thrown back at me on this occasion. However, I want to say this. Even during the five years I was a member of the opposition I always had the highest respect for those who had the responsibility for the day-to-day administration of this legislation. I refer to the officials of the department. I think again the reason the administration has been maintained on a high level is because they without exception, are veterans in their own right.

As I listened carefully to the views expressed I noted general unanimity, and even