

*Procedure and Organization*

**Mr. Danforth:** What is the point of order?

**Mr. Deakon:** —the members of committees can speak their own minds.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Kent-Essex (Mr. Danforth).

**Mr. Danforth:** The hon. member who has interjected says government members on committees are allowed to speak their minds. I would believe this if it were done in the quiet of a committee room without members of the press being present so that the rumour would get back to the government only in a committee report, handed down five weeks late in some cases. I have grave doubts about our committee system when chairmen of committees appointed by the government are not allowed to make a report to the house until it is convenient to the government to do so.

**Mr. Deakon:** You should come to the justice committee sometime.

**Mr. Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys):** What did Steve Otto say about committees?

**Mr. Danforth:** As my colleague has pointed out, the *Hansard* record shows that instructions have been given to government members of committees. How can we have confidence in a government of this calibre? As a member from Ontario I have the right to oppose in every way possible a measure which I believe would make it impossible for members from that province to put forward adequately in the house the wishes and views of the citizens they represent.

So far we have had in this parliament harmony to a degree that I have not before experienced in the years I have been here. I was amazed and gratified to see how much work could be accomplished when there was a measure of agreement among the leaders of the parties. I believed this was the dawn of a new era. Although many of us were suspicious, we were delighted to see what could happen by agreement. But this harmony has gone. We now have a House of Commons that is ugly in its attitude. Why is this? It is because the government has introduced a measure that we believe will make it impossible for us to perform our duties in the way they should be performed. On every occasion the government asks us to place confidence in it, and breaks that trust. How can we then have confidence in it? The government reiterates that this measure will never be imposed except in extreme circumstances. How can we possibly accept this?

I have always had the greatest respect for the office of the Prime Minister. I still have that respect, but I now have very little respect for the man who holds that high office. Any man who stands in this house and calls a debate on such an important matter as rule changes a stupid filibuster either does not understand our parliamentary system, or cares nothing for it.

**Mr. Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys):** He cannot be bothered with it.

**Mr. Danforth:** The Prime Minister says that 80 per cent of the questions asked by hon. members are sheer hypocrisy. As far as I am concerned, that statement is the ultimate in hypocrisy. The government has said there is need for rule changes, that we must increase the efficiency of the house, that it has a majority in the house and therefore represents the wishes of the people. I agree that it received a mandate. The members of the opposition have always accepted the fact that the government received a mandate, but it was to bring in legislation and to lead this nation. When the government introduces a new rule which provides that the right of opposition members to speak will be removed, it no longer represents the majority of people in this country.

**Mr. MacInnis:** They do not represent the majority.

**Mr. Danforth:** By way of this legislation the government is asking the opposition parties to agree to leave 12 million Canadians voiceless in their parliament. We can never accept laws of this type which deny the right of Canadians to be heard in their parliament.

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

**Mr. Danforth:** The government talks of limiting debate to four, five or six days. We know that four or five hours a day are devoted to debate. There are 264 members in this house. Each one of us represents a different area of Canada, sometimes a different ethnic group. Does anyone believe we could limit debate to four, five or six speakers a day, from members representing all parties in the house, and adequately express the views of this great nation to the extent that we could form a consensus and vote on important issues?

● (5:30 p.m.)

What do the new rules mean to me? I try to be reasonable in my approach to parliamentary activities. I agree with those who