

*Procedure and Organization*

it. According to *Votes and Proceedings* for June 20, 75A reads as follows:

When a Minister of the Crown, from his place in the House, states that there is agreement among the representatives of all parties to allot a specified number of days or hours to the proceedings at one or more stages of any public bill, he may propose a motion, without notice, setting forth the terms of such agreed allocation; and every such motion shall be decided forthwith, without debate or amendment.

I have heard no criticism in respect of 75A. This is one of the rules whereby the house leaders of all parties can act and act advantageously. Rule 75B reads:

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 public bill, he may propose a motion, without notice, setting forth the terms of the said proposed allocation; provided that for the purposes of this standing order an allocation may be proposed in one motion to cover the proceedings at both the report and the third reading stages of a bill if that motion is consistent with the provisions of Standing Order 7(13). During the consideration of any such motion no member may speak more than once or longer than ten minutes. Not more than two hours after the commencement of proceedings thereon, Mr. Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the said motion.

I understand that this proposal did have a great deal of discussion in the committee, and is the result of a consensus among committee members. I think I am safe in saying most members of the house are prepared to accept 75A and 75B. There appears to be a slight problem with regard to the determination of what constitutes a majority, but I rely on the wisdom, experience and goodwill that prevails among the members of that committee to bring forward a determination of what constitutes a majority.

It is 75c which is the reason we are here. I shall read 75c:

A Minister of the Crown who from his place in the House at a previous sitting has stated that an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 75A or 75B in respect of proceedings at the stage at which a public bill was then under consideration either in the House or in any committee and has given notice at that sitting of his intention so to do may propose a motion for the purpose of allotting a specified number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at that stage; provided that the time allotted for any stage is not to be less than one sitting day and provided that for the purposes of this standing order an allocation may be proposed in one motion to cover the proceedings at both the report and the third reading stages on a bill if that motion is consistent with the provisions of Standing Order 75(13). During the

consideration of any such motion no member may speak more than once or longer than ten minutes. Not more than two hours after the commencement of proceedings thereon, Mr. Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the said motion.

This is the section which puts fear in the hearts of the opposition members, and which should put fear into the hearts of thinking members on the government side, because it is a naked power which many of us in this house are not prepared to give to the government. Mr. Speaker, I should like to quote to you, and members of the house, some of the statements I have read which are pertinent to this particular debate:

Power abdicates only under stress of counter-power.

That was said by Martin Buber in "Paths in Utopia" in 1950. This is the reason we in the opposition parties are bringing forward our counter-power to offset the naked power which is sought by the government.

• (4:40 p.m.)

The second quotation is "the greater the powers the more danger of abuse". That statement was made by Edmund Burke in a speech he made at Middlesex in 1771. One would think that this remark could certainly apply to 75c if it were implemented.

Lord Acton, who has been mentioned many times, said that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. It is for these reasons we in the opposition party are not prepared to give the government the power contained in 75c.

During the debate last December in respect of 16A, I received a letter from a radio station in Toronto called CHUM in which an argument against this bill was set forth effectively and persuasively. I should like to ask your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, while I read parts of this letter:

No government requires absolute power to run this country of ours and CHUM cannot understand why the Trudeau government is insisting on absolute power before getting on with the just society's business.

The government's stubborn insistence on the right to determine in advance how long debates of the nation's business shall run—suggests an impatience with the machinery of democracy.

It is hard to believe that our fantastic Centennial year spirit is being followed up by a government bid for absolute power.

It is also hard to appreciate why the Trudeau government isn't content to make do with the generous majority of seats handed to it in the last election.