

Procedure and Organization

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Calgary South is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Under what guise is the hon. member attempting to speak?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary South is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Mahoney: Mr. Speaker, I was taken off the transport committee at my own request because I was going to be necessarily absent from Ottawa. I returned to the committee immediately I came back to the house.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): It is nice to have the record clear on that point, but I should like to know why it was said otherwise in the committee. In any event, as long as the government has the power to remove members from committees, as it has, we will see independent-minded committee members suddenly taken off committees. No motion in this house is necessary. The hon. member for Middlesex (Mr. Lind) last year suddenly found himself involuntarily taken off a committee, though at that time the government had to make a motion in the house before it could do so.

If the government does not like the report of a committee it can prepare a government motion to excise the portions of the report in question. Then it will claim the right of precedence simply by instructing the chairman not to move the motion for concurrence. On top of this we have allocation of time. As I have said, the house would be bound hand and foot, with a gag less than an inch from the mouths of its members, always at the ready, if 75c were approved.

[Translation]

If we want to consider closure, I will tell you that it is provided for implicitly in the Standing Orders.

Hon. Members: Give examples.

Mr. Lambert: Of closure? I am willing to tell you how it can work.

[English]

The hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas), the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) and others have indicated that in the future there could be a change of government. We must remember that these proposed rules are not temporary but will be in force until the house decides otherwise, and the examples put forward by

the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands related to matters about which there would be a great deal of controversy in the house. Let us assume that old age security is made—

● (2:20 p.m.)

An hon. Member: Go home.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): That is all right, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member is new here and a member of that arrogant majority. Let us assume that the government is going to amend the Old Age Security Act by imposing a means test.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Not that.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): I am only assuming that this would be the proposal. Let us say that the government of the day says, "We are going to allow one day for second reading," and that at the end of that one day's debate the motion is put, after which the bill is sent to a committee of the house. Let us say that it is to be in committee for two days.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): For one and a half hours each day.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Yes. The committee could be allocated one period a day in a committee room. It is all too easy to have 15 or 17 committees programmed for a day. Committees are fairly simple to schedule, although they do not always go ahead. At any rate, there is discussion in a committee primarily composed of government supporters for two days, and then the committee has to report. When the bill comes to the house at the report stage an allocation order is made and there is a further two days' debate at the report stage, followed by third reading. But, Mr. Speaker, there will be debate at the report stage only if there are amendments; if no amendments are put forward at that stage there will be no debate. So there might be two days of debate followed by third reading. That is all that would be allowed.

I know the hon. member for Sudbury (Mr. Jerome) said he thought that allowing one member from the front bench and one back-bench member from each party to speak would be a sufficient expression of opinion. Isn't that cosy, Mr. Speaker?