

*Procedure and Organization*

I must admit today that I was entirely wrong as each and everyone of the government members are still possessed with the arrogance that was always shown by this government. And it is because of the consequences that would result from the concurrence in the proposed rules, that I decided to make some demands which are also, I believe, those of the people I have the honour to represent in this house.

Does the hon. member for Papineau wish to say something?

**Mr. George C. Lachance (Lafontaine):** For Lafontaine.

**Mr. Ricard:** The hon. member for Lafontaine could surely abide by the rules and stop interrupting me unnecessarily, besides, no one can understand what he says.

**Mr. Lachance:** Would the hon. member allow me a question?

**Mr. Lambert:** You will make your speech later.

**Mr. Ricard:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member can make his speech in due time.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe.

**Mr. Ricard:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have listened, without interrupting them, to the members opposite, and I would like the French Canadians, those from the province of Quebec at least, to show me the same courtesy I have shown to all previous speakers, whether on this side or on the other side of the house.

I was sent here by the people of Saint-Hyacinthe to speak on their behalf, and I am sure that as well as the rest of the people in Quebec, they do not approve of the members being gagged. In general, the population does not approve of such methods to silence the members of the house. Our constituents have entrusted us with a specific mandate: to protect their interests and to express their views in the house of commons.

My fellow citizens want their rights to be respected by the government in power, whether it be Conservative, Liberal or other, and they will not tolerate that I be silenced by the will of only one man. They think that if I want to speak, I must have the right to do it as often as I see fit, especially when their interests are at stake, while I respect the rules of the House of Commons.

[Mr. Ricard.]

Mr. Speaker, my constituents think that only the Speaker has the power to call me to order and to ask that I sit down if I do not follow the rules.

In its simplest expression, rule 75c means that even before a legislative proposal is known to the house, closure will be forced upon us and after four days of debate, no member will be able to rise in order to enforce the rights and privileges of his constituents.

It goes without saying that I object and that I will object with all my strength to this measure because I think it is a dictatorial one. In addition, I am sure that the people in general are opposed to it, not only because I want to have the right to express in the house the ideas that are dictated to me by my constituents, but also because I want to be sure that those who will come after me will also be able to enforce the interests of the constituents of the St. Hyacinthe areas as often as they see fit.

My constituents believe strongly that the rights which are guaranteed to us by our democracy do not allow the government to resort to dictatorial measures in order to silence their representative.

There is another reason which leads me to oppose the adoption of the measure now under study.

● (9:40 p.m.)

In fact, we know that in 1964, if my memory serves me right, a debate which is now history, took place with regard to the adoption of a distinctive national flag. At that time, closure was imposed upon us and in a circular which I sent out to my constituents, I explained the reasons for the stand which I had taken with regard to the adoption of a distinctive national flag. I stated then that I would object with all my might to the imposition of closure, and I quote:

Closure is an undemocratic measure. I voted against its application because I believe it is unfair to prevent a member from making his views known in the house as often as he deems necessary to do so. Even if such a measure were presented by my party, I would still vote against it.

I cannot miss this opportunity to say that I am against adopting a closure rule. With my colleagues of the Conservative party and the other parties of the opposition I shall do my outmost to try to bring the government to its senses.

Mr. Speaker, I fail to understand the submissiveness of my friends across the way. I