

Business of the House

with our procedures of today. This should not limit debate merely to the proposals put forward by the government in respect of a particular debate. It is for that reason I share the difficulties of my colleague, the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Aiken). To me Rule 33 is very questionable and imprecise at the present time.

I put this additional argument to Your Honour in order that your ruling, whatever it might be, will not exclude or settle the question which I feel has not been investigated or considered. I refer to Standing Order 33 which has to do with stages other than the report stage. I put to Your Honour that this rule is fraught with pitfalls, particularly as to the extent set forth.

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I will be brief in reply to the three points raised by the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Aiken). First, with regard to his interpretation based on the British rule, I think it is fair to note that the British Standing Order 33 expressly talks about a question in the singular, while Standing Order 33 here in its final three lines refers to all such questions as may be decided. So, it is quite clear this rule is intended to cover all possible questions included in the order.

Secondly in respect of the amendment to Standing Order 33, since 1964 as I see it the amendment is really an amendment to delete the reference to the committee of supply and the committee of ways and means, committees which were abolished in 1968 under our new rules. Those amendments were made in that part of the rule which the member indicates does not apply here. Therefore the amendment does not in any way affect the substance of the motion made here.

Finally it seems to me that it would be difficult to have a case more on all fours with this situation than the case which was decided in this house on December 14, 1964, in connection with the flag debate resolution. At that time the amendment outstanding was in the name of the former member for Middlesex West, Mr. Thomas. The Solicitor General (Mr. McIlraith), who at that time was the President of the Privy Council, gave notice and moved a motion of closure in these terms and in identical circumstances. The Chair having the opportunity, and indeed the obligation, to decide on the question of order at that time found it to be in order.

For those reasons I submit that the motion made here in the terms of Standing Order 33 is equally in order.

Mr. Speaker: I am grateful to hon. members for the comments they have made as guidance to the Chair. The objections that have been made by hon. members have been logical and I have given very serious thought to them. At the same time I have given very serious consideration to the arguments advanced by the hon. President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) in support of his rejection of the point put forward by the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Aiken), of which he gave notice of his intention to bring forward procedural objection at this time.

I also recognize the difficulty referred to by the hon. member for Calgary Centre (Mr. Harkness). It is obvious that we may some day want to resolve the difficulties to which he has referred. That relates also to one of the difficulties referred to by the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert).

There is no question that Standing Order 33 as it now reads is not without uncertainty and pitfalls. As has been suggested it might well be that early consideration should be given to that Standing Order in relation to a consideration of other Standing Orders.

It has been my pleasure, good fortune and privilege to hear all the contributions which have been made to this debate during the last two weeks. I have had the impression that at times the discussion has not related to the amendment before the house. At the same time I thought some of the speeches which referred to the motion initially presented by the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Blair) had greater relevancy to the motion proposed by the hon. President of the Privy Council.

Let me now go to the argument advanced by the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka, who has suggested that in view of the fact there may be some point at issue in the interpretation of Standing Order 33, we might be further ahead to consider the similar standing order in the British parliament, and how it has been interpreted. I would be in full agreement with this suggestion if there were not considerable Canadian precedent and practice in the interpretation of our Standing Order 33, as this Standing Order has been in effect in the House of Commons over 50 years.

There are many precedents, and more than those which have been quoted and referred to