

*Proposal for Time Allocation*

Speaker appears before the committee along with the whips of the various parties and some of the prominent members of the parties, and they give their views. They are faced with precisely the same kind of problems with which we are faced. One of the major problems is one which was mentioned I think by the right hon. gentlemen, who had served on both sides of the house, namely the fact the government attempts to introduce legislation beyond the capacity of the government and the country to digest. This is a very serious difficulty.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that basically one of the major responsibilities of the government is to look carefully at the priorities. We would all like things to be done, I am sure, having in mind the situation which we occupy and what we have done during the course of political campaigns. We all have ideas we would like to see incorporated in the legislation, probably in many cases better ideas than the government has. We must recognize that the government has the responsibility and to that extent there must be a determination to assess the capacity of the country to absorb these legislative enactments. This has not been the case with this government.

I want to deal to some extent with some of the comments made by the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam (Mr. Douglas). I agree with many of the proposals he has brought forward. I must say, with all due respect, that in my view the rules of this house do not belong to the government. They do not belong to any political party: They belong to the members of this house. I honestly do not believe it adds to the likelihood of free and uninhibited discussion which we must have, not only in this house but in the committees, if there is any suggestion that any particular proposal for changes in the rules is the property of any party.

I accept the fact that the hon. member put these suggestions forward in good faith. However, I do not feel this is likely to be conducive to the type of change which we must have if parliament is going to survive as an active, viable and useful force. Equally I say to the hon. member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Olson), who intervened in this connection, that his definition of the allocation of time—I will have more to say about that later—if carried through to its logical conclusion would mean a great many changes. To what extent are some of the smaller parties of this house prepared to accept on motions—and in my humble opinion the government makes far too many motions that need not be

made—an allocation of time in the form of not making statements on announcements which are made, with the right reserved to them to ask questions on orders of the day? This is a practice frequently followed in the United Kingdom. Personally I think it is a useful practice, because you precipitate a far more intelligent approach to a subject matter if, the minister having made a statement, an opportunity is given to ask questions. However, that is something the committee on procedure will have to discuss at a later stage.

• (9:00 p.m.)

Dealing with the particular motion before us, Mr. Speaker, I think I have been objective in my approach to the subject matter of this problem. I have not intervened or spoken in the debate up to this time, though I think I did say something on the resolution stage. I must be perfectly honest and say there are undoubtedly aspects of the debate which have appeared up to the present time which would justify one in taking the position that it might be a good idea, if not to bring the debate to an end, at least to arrange for a more orderly completion to the discussions we have had.

There have been invitations to impose closure and threats to do so. To my thinking, there has been repetition on all sides of the house which has been unnecessary and has not enlivened the debate. Statements have been made which I think should not have been made. I realize, Mr. Speaker, that we are not attending a tea party in the House of Commons. Feelings do run high, as they should and must. People do have a point of view to present and they feel very strongly about certain issues. I would be both surprised and unhappy if in the course of our debates we did not see these strong views and representations reflected in language which perhaps the following morning the hon. member who had used it might wish to correct. I have no objection to a little blood flowing, but I prefer blood and not garbage.

As a result of the continuance of this debate in this way, I think one of the problems has been our inability to get into some very critical and important issues which are involved in various clauses, the necessity for moving amendments and for joining issue, for coming together in conflict, on matters which have not been dealt with so far. If this debate ends without this being done, I think we will be doing less than our duty.