

*Standing Orders*

other, the members of the opposition are justified in demanding that they have a longer period of time in which to express their points of view than the members of the Liberal party. I think the hon. member for Portage-Neepawa made a good point in that regard although he may have been bringing it up for a different reason.

The government has a majority and can put through whatever legislation it wants to. You may ask: How can they get legislation through if there is a filibuster? The government has power to impose closure, although they do not like to use it. But the only power the opposition has is to advance arguments in order to convince the government that legislation should be changed. Sometimes the opposition must speak at great length in order to convince the government that legislation should be changed. We have recent examples of how as a result of argument put forward by the opposition the government finally realized that their legislation was not wise and changed it.

This happened in connection with contracts at the last session. As a result of a strong protest by the opposition the government changed their legislation. I recall some years ago the same thing happened during the budget debate in connection with depreciation. The opposition objected to certain depreciation provisions and debated all day, and the next day the Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott) brought down an amendment to carry out the very thing the opposition had been asking for.

It is on such occasions that the opposition must have time in order to put forward their arguments, and put them forward forcibly. I am convinced that if the proposals contained in this resolution were carried out they would greatly restrict the efficient operation of the opposition. I think all members will agree that it is not desirable that the efficiency of the opposition should be cut down or restricted.

There is one other point I want to bring up and perhaps the members of the Liberal party will not agree with me on this. The opposition actually represents more voters than do the members of the Liberal party. A vast majority of the Liberal members got in with minority votes and therefore the opposition in this house must express the opinion of a greater number of voters than the members of the Liberal party can speak for. So I think there are three good reasons why the apportionment of time should be on the basis of more time for the opposition than for the Liberals. But I repeat that it would be very difficult to accomplish such an apportionment and I think it would be far better for the

[Mr. Quelch.]

government to leave that question aside altogether. I come now to paragraph (c) which reads:

For the limiting to one half hour of the debate on all procedural motions and underlying amendments.

Surely the hon. member for Halton could not have been serious in making that suggestion. I do not think any hon. member will suggest that such a thing would be feasible. Imagine some point of order coming up in the house and the first speaker being the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. No one else would have a chance to speak as he would probably take the whole half hour. Even if somebody else was allowed to speak for a few minutes, he would want to reply. If you limited it to a half hour you would just have one member speaking and the rest of us would not have a chance to say anything. We could not possibly support this section. I am also very much opposed to section (d) which reads:

For provision that at the expiration of the seventh allotted day the chairman of the committee of supply and ways and means shall forthwith and without further debate put every question necessary to dispose of all of the votes of the departmental estimates under consideration.

Suppose we were dealing with the estimates of the Department of Agriculture which contain many items. An hon. member might be interested in an item at the bottom of the list and might feel that he would never have a chance to speak on it because the time would be used up. He would be forced to take up that matter on the first item and the result would be that every member would be bringing up his own particular matters on the first item and you would have a most disorderly debate. Section (e) reads:

For the requirement that at least four members should rise in their seats to express opposition for a request for unanimous consent to a suspension of the rules, otherwise unanimous consent of the house to be presumed when requested.

We would not oppose that. I think it is only reasonable that if all hon. members except one desire that a certain rule be suspended, then that rule should be suspended. I think any party in the house should be able to find four members to object if they wanted to object and the government would then not be able to proceed. I do not think one member should be allowed to hold up proceedings. He may happen to be in bad temper or have a chip on his shoulder and out of pure devilment want to stop the proceedings.

I think there are changes that could be made in the present rules which would greatly expedite the proceedings and increase the efficiency of the house. It should not be very difficult to bring about these changes.