

Procedure and Organization

would reduce from 20 to 10 minutes the time allotted to each member.

I should like to quote only a few excerpts from this Standing Order to show to what extent I agree with it.

I feel that a solution cannot—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bécharde): Order. I see from the last words of the hon. member that he is drifting away slightly from the topic under study, namely the amendment of the hon. member for Peace River which reads as follows:

That the third report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization be referred back to the committee, with instructions to amend it by deleting therefrom proposed Standing Order 75c.

I therefore ask the hon. member to limit his remarks to this amendment.

Mr. Beaudoin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In my opinion, an amendment was submitted because a bill or part of a bill must have been discussed. If a bill or part of a bill is to be studied, it must be mentioned according to the rules. As far as Standing Order 75c is concerned, I suggest—and this cannot be repeated often enough—that we must know its contents in order to discuss it sensibly.

I shall revert, if I may, Mr. Speaker, to Standing Order 75c, to say that I support the amendment providing for the deletion of the following words from the said Standing Order:

A Minister of the Crown who from his place in the House at a previous sitting has stated—

It is intended to allot a specified number of days and hours for the consideration of each legislation.

I wish to congratulate the government for having considered, while working out that legislation, reducing from 20 to 10 minutes each member's period of time allowed for discussing any bill affected by this procedure. However, I am not at all in agreement on one point—and that is the reason why I feel that the amendment is absolutely necessary—that fact that this section of rule 75c grants so much power to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) or to a minister.

Why should hon. members be gagged by means of rule 75c? Is anyone toying with the idea of becoming a dictator some day? Whatever the government in office, if a man is entitled to decide for how long an hon. member should have the floor and discuss a bill or part of it, I believe that this is the end of democracy.

[Mr. Beaudoin.]

What are we going to do to democracy with such legislation? What will become of the undeniable parliamentary rights of the hon. members in the house? What will they represent if this motion is voted without any amendment?

As for us, from the opposition, do we not represent part of the Canadian population? What does the government think of the opposition, be it Créditiste, New Democratic or Progressive Conservative? Are we not as important as the gentlemen of the Liberal party? Have we not as they have, been elected by the people?

What on earth are the ministers and the cabinet members thinking about when they want us to adopt Rule 75c? Do they imagine that they alone have seen the light, do they think that they have the monopoly of truth and that the spirit is upon them?

Standing Order 75c, in my opinion, alters everything that has been done, and destroys all friendly and sincere relations established between to government and the opposition.

If the government does no longer want to co-operate with the elected representatives of the people, I believe that democracy is becoming an empty word. The President of the Privy Council, should, in my opinion, bring in an amendment to protect the basic rights of hon. members or future governments. He should do so right now or support the amendment under consideration this evening, and for the past three weeks, in order to come frankly to a cordial, charitable and equitable agreement, for the good of all hon. members and the Canadian people.

I wanted earlier to congratulate the government for having reduced the time limit on speeches from 20 to 10 minutes. I shall immediately apply rules 75A and 75B and speak only for ten minutes.

I therefore conclude my speech. This way, I will not be accused of holding up the business of the house with idle speeches. Moreover, I shall be proud to have co-operated in saving time so that the house may adjourn as soon as possible as all hon. members wish.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bécharde): Is the house ready for the question?

Mr. Bell: No, Mr. Speaker. You could not see our speaker who was behind the curtain.

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, I should like to offer my comments on the motion now before the