

thanks for his contribution and services, not only to me in my role in the committee, but to parliament generally and the cause of reform of the house.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, in opening my remarks this afternoon I want to in many ways re-echo the opening words at least of the chairman of the committee on procedure, the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Blair). As vice-chairman of the committee I think I can also echo the closing remarks of the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) with regard to the staff and assistance we received in the committee. I particularly want to underline the remarks of the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton with regard to the spirit of harmony that prevailed in the committee.

As the hon. member indicated, and I reiterate his statement, it has been said that the committee concluded its deliberations in wild disagreement, but someone must have been under the strong influence of opium, or whatever it was, to say this and must have been looking for sensationalism. Of course there was disagreement on some principles. There was serious discussion. There was a great deal of consensus. There were proposals and counter-proposals, and we agreed to disagree on certain fundamental points. The opposition lined up on one side and the government on the other. There were lesser disagreements with regard to supply, and other disagreements with regard to emergency procedures. But anyone who suggests there was wild disagreement is saying what is very far from the truth. Indeed, the representatives on the committee of members of parliament in all parties in the house were concerned with the efficient operation of this house, our house, not the government's house but the house of the members of parliament. This concerns all of us.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Therefore representatives of all parties have indeed a vested interest to see that we work out the best possible rules. I would say that within the limitations of our respective interests and our respective views, this has likely come about.

• (3:30 p.m.)

This report is not in any way a government blueprint of what it considers the rules to be, except for a couple of very fundamental points

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which have already been referred to by the Leader of the Opposition, (Mr. Stanfield), the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin), and the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) last night. We know now what the issues are in regard to the fundamental parts of these reports. The points of major departure are the elimination of the committee of supply and the allocation of the time of debate or otherwise by direction of the government, not only in the house but in committee as well. I will come back to that point later. Provision 16-A is not limited to proceedings in this house, and therefore any statements by the Prime Minister or other representatives of the government that this is going to give much greater freedom to the private member to discuss in committee either legislation or estimates are a fallacy. Why is that so? Because the government house leader, under the conditions of provision 16-A, has the right to dictate to this house by way of a government order how long proceedings may take in committee, either on legislation or in supply, inasmuch as the proposed standing order states "every item".

I put it to you, Mr. Speaker, that the one place where the government house leader has no place—as a matter of fact this house really has no place—is in the committees because it is said that a committee is the master of its own proceedings. In fact you, Mr. Speaker, and I when I occupied your chair, have refused to intervene in the proceedings of the committees because the chairman is supreme there. The committee is the master of its own proceedings, and yet under rule 16-A there is a subterfuge that the government, through its house leader, can interpose and will interfere.

I say further that Mr. Speaker has, from time immemorial, categorized himself as being the servant of this house and the servant of the members of this house as expressed through the rules of this house which protect the privileges of members and their rights and obligations as against each other, the rights and obligations of the opposition versus the government, and vice-versa. However, if we take government imposed rules this means that Mr. Speaker does not become the servant of this house but instead becomes the servant of the government, and that is a denial of our democratic form of government. That is why I maintain that the principle of government imposed rules which go down to the fundamental points that these do are wrong because Your Honour's position has been placed in jeopardy as the result of these proposals. You are no longer the arbiter of