

Procedure and Organization

indication of this, and no member of the government side can point to one piece of legislation that has been held up or stopped from passing because of the work of the opposition in this house.

I spent some time in a provincial legislature and I know the problems which opposition parties have in putting their views forward. I say to the members of this house that this government has had full co-operation from all the parties in the House of Commons in making rule changes and in trying to process the work of this parliament more efficiently and more effectively.

We found last June, or earlier, that a plan had been made to adjourn this house on June 27. All groups agreed that this was a proper date to adjourn and we worked towards that adjournment date, co-operating fully. We sat longer hours in the latter part of June, and we worked out an agreement with the government house leader on private bills. We agreed to limit debate on a number of measures. There is only one group which has broken the co-operative arrangement which had been set up, and that is the government group under the government house leader.

As I said before, if there is any party in this house that has held up legislation it is the government, particularly on major issues some of which have been enumerated by other speakers this afternoon. I do not intend to cover them again.

I should like to point out in closing that all across Canada the feeling is becoming more evident every day, through editorials, newspaper and radio comment, that the people of this nation do not want restrictive measures such as 75c to become legal in the parliament of Canada.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired.

Some hon. Members: Continue.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous agreement?

An hon. Member: No.

Mr. H. W. Danforth (Kent-Essex): Mr. Speaker, I rise to take part in this debate because I feel I must, as a member of parliament honoured to represent thousands of citizens of Canada who live in Ontario. I cannot see how any man who is determined to make a real, honest effort on behalf of those he represents could in any way support, to any

[Mr. Harding.]

degree, the measure outlined in 75c. That is why I have no hesitation whatsoever in supporting the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin). I have been impressed with the high calibre of speeches we have had this afternoon from two hon. members, the hon. member for South Shore (Mr. Crouse) and the hon. member for Kootenay West (Mr. Harding). You will find that they have pointed out in no uncertain terms what would happen to parliament, and what could be the outcome in respect of the rights of members should such rule changes be passed.

The hon. member for Bruce (Mr. Whicher) indicated that all members of parliament should accept proposed rule 75c. The fact that backbenchers on the government side of the house have in the main accepted the gag rule is no reason why we should follow suit. As a matter of fact it is one of the things that makes me very suspicious about 75c. Hon. members opposite speak only when they are allowed to speak. I witness the humility of ministers who come into the house only when they are allowed. It creates great awe in the House of Commons when, by order, ministers absent themselves from the chamber. They, too, are members of parliament. They, too, have the responsibility of representing their constituents. I would never call myself a member of parliament if I allowed anyone in the house, except Your Honour, to order me to vacate my seat for even a moment.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

• (5:20 p.m.)

Mr. Danforth: Why are we suspicious? It is because we know the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has not enough confidence in his members to allow them to carry out their responsibilities, and sets up regional desks to find out what is happening in their areas. These commissars report on what government members are doing and how they are doing it. Is this what we want in a democratic Canada?

A great deal has been said in this debate about committees and the government members who serve on them. We know that if they have dared to oppose the wishes of the government they have been quickly removed from membership of the committee.

Mr. Deakon: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I would draw the hon. member's attention to the justice committee, and for his information—