

Conduct of House Business

even if it is claimed that time would thus be saved and the parliamentary proceedings hastened; there are still principles to be safeguarded, principles recognizing the rights of each and every member of the house. Accordingly, the President of the Privy Council should consider the amendment moved by the hon. member for Lapointe and the government itself should move this amendment prohibiting a debate on this matter but maintaining appeals against the Speaker's ruling, as was the practice in the past.

Once more I say that this will protect and help all members. We are here now, others will replace us in a few years, another parliament will sit in 25 years, and the actions laid down today will have repercussions tomorrow. Then, what Speaker, what parliamentary procedure will we have left, if we go on cutting down and cutting out here and there as we are doing now?

We are prepared to support, in order to facilitate the parliamentary procedure, those changes to the effect that there shall be no debate on a ruling made by the Speaker, but we are bent on having our rights and privileges preserved, safeguarded and respected so that we can appeal from a ruling by the Speaker when required.

• (9:50 p.m.)

[*English*]

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Tardif): Is the committee ready for the question?

Mr. Lambert: Mr. Chairman, there are only three or four minutes remaining which I should like to use up in referring to this matter. First of all, in putting forward his amendment I believe the hon. Member for Lapointe has involved himself in somewhat of a paradox in that he spoke about British traditions, the British Parliamentary system and the rights of Members thereunder. Perhaps he has forgotten that an appeal from the Speaker's ruling has never existed in the British Parliamentary system. It does not exist at all. It does not exist at the committee level. There are other ways of dealing with the matter and somehow or other Speakers—

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Lambert: —have always—

Mr. Grégoire: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman—

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Tardif): Order; the hon. Member for Lapointe.

[*Mr. Caouette.*]

[*Translation*]

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order.

Mr. Lambert: What, a point of order?

Mr. Grégoire: I rise on a point of order, because I think the hon. Member for Edmonton West just misinterpreted my remarks. I never mentioned that there was a right of appeal in the British Parliament, but I simply mentioned that the British parliamentary tradition recognized that the house was master of standing orders and procedure. It is not the same thing at all.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Tardif): That is not a point of order. It is simply a difference of interpretation.

[*English*]

Mr. Lambert: I quite agree with you, Mr. Chairman, that it was a debating point and not a point of order. Perhaps the hon. Member for Lapointe will recognize a point of order. In any event, dealing with the question of appeals from the Speaker's rulings, the other day when I spoke on the main motion I made my points in regard to this. Perhaps I would be in a subjective position in this regard.

However, in all sincerity I feel that one of the chief difficulties with the business of Parliament over the past 10 years has been the somewhat indiscriminate use of appeals against Speaker's rulings, not on points of jurisprudence or points of procedure but for political effect. This has been at the basis of it, and I do not wish to attribute motives. May I say in that regard, Mr. Chairman, that the same rule should apply to the Chairman of Committees. Frankly, I do not see the value of the proposed amendment because all it does is carry the appeal one stage from the Chairman to the Speaker. I cannot see how a Speaker is going to destroy one of his Chairmen by not backing him up. We are, therefore, going to get the same thing. Why not have it as it is in the British House where there is no appeal?

Some hon. Members such as the hon. Member for Lapointe, the hon. Member for Skeena and the hon. Member for Villeneuve have expressed what I believe is a justifiable doubt about a wrong decision in law remaining on the books as a precedent which subsequent Speakers may pick up. The other day I made a suggestion. It is one which I see has been incorporated in Professor Smith's book. I do not want to make any claim of authorship but we did discuss this