

Procedure and Organization

This year, Mr. Speaker, is a memorable, outstanding year for me—not only for me but for all the new members, and especially those of the Ralliement créditiste. This institution was, to our mind, the most respectable and respected body in Canada. To us parliament was the supreme institution where democratic rights could be fought for, where our points of view could be freely expressed, where we could attempt, through our own limited means, to improve the laws and represent the Canadian people with dignity; we were happy with our first experience.

Mr. Speaker, I conclude on a very sad and melancholy note, because on the eve of the adjournment of the session, the very few rights we had left are snatched away from us. We shall not be able to call it a holiday because the government has decided this to give a rest to its own members who have been twiddling their thumbs since the beginning of the session.

Mr. Speaker, this year in the house has been a most enlightening experience which unfortunately is ending in a most inauspicious way. I would like to tell the government that new members are sorry that it decided to apply the rule of closure and to do so with a smile.

The government sank in the estimation of the Ralliement Créditiste, and the only thing to do is to disregard the Standing Orders entirely, since from now on governments will most probably assume rights they do not possess.

Not only does the government wish to force its views upon us, but it also want to control the business of the house and of the hon. members. But they would never be able to have under their thumb and to control the hon. members of the Ralliement Créditiste, because we are free agents. We shall stand up and be counted, in spite of the liberal dictatorship!

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the day.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Is the hon. member for Egmont rising on a point of order?

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): No, Mr. Speaker; I am rising to speak in the debate.

Mr. Speaker: We are on motions and I have to call orders of the day. When we return to the debate, the hon. member for Egmont will be recognized.

[Mr. Fortin.]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS**PROCEDURE AND ORGANIZATION****MOTION FOR CONCURRENCE IN THIRD REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

The house resumed, from Friday, July 18, consideration of the motion of Mr. Blair that the third report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization presented to the house on Friday, June 20, 1969, be concurred in, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Baldwin (p. 10963).

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, it does not give me any particular pleasure to speak in this house this afternoon, but perhaps it is typical that as I rise to speak on this issue, the most important issue to be raised in this house, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) sees fit to absent himself. What is involved here is an issue so basic to the future of this parliament that one wonders whether it is possible for us to discuss this vital matter with passions fanned to the boiling point.

It is unfortunate that one of the high points of this era, the week that man descended upon the moon, will also be identified by Canadians as the week that the government chose to descend to dictatorship. As others have indicated this afternoon we have seen a parliament, in which rested the promise of great things, suddenly soured and now brought almost to the point of impotence as a result of the action of an insensitive and, one must conclude, unaware government. If I were a man of stronger language I would not merely talk of the souring of parliament, but of its contemplated rape. For what we have witnessed here during the last few minutes is, to my mind, the death knell of the just society.

From a phrase, "Come work with me", introduced little more than a year ago, we have reverted this afternoon to "Don't bother me". We have learned that a government, unable to sort out its priorities, now considers that the best way off the hook is frankly and blatantly to tell us that parliament is a supreme nuisance. Those with any knowledge of history know that democracy, at any period in time, can survive for only a generation or two without the support of the people. Those who sit on the government benches this afternoon, those who conclude that the majority has rights, have also now declared that minorities must have no rights. We who have been led to believe that a government in