

*Procedure and Organization*

Reich many Liberals believe they are destined to rule for 1,000 years, but I also know that like Hitler they won't.

• (4:50 p.m.)

When they come over here to sit I wonder how many of them will then be enthusiastic about little old rule 75c. What kind of legislation is the government preparing that they need 75c? Will there be a radical shake-up, a blatant move to the left, to the right, sideways, or up and down, or will this revolutionize the way of Canadian life? I doubt it very much. I do not think this is going to happen. Nothing in the personnel of the government benches or their record thus far would give us any cause to be alarmed on that score.

I think it is more likely that 75c arises from the dissatisfaction of articulate and capable backbenchers on the government side who are frustrated by the fact that there is little for them to say. They sit over there twiddling their hearing aids because the government—and any government would feel this way—is always in some haste to have its legislation passed. Contributions from government backbenchers only prolong the agony.

In emulation of their leader the backbenchers arrived in Ottawa last fall full of "kiss and vinegar" and found to their disappointment and dismay that they were not expected to do very much at all. The front benchers were supposed to do all the talking. The first and most obvious thing to do was get everyone busy on committees. It did not really matter whether the government was guided in any way by committee reports. On the contrary, sometimes the government was not even courteous or political enough to wait for a committee to report before it made decisions in respect of things which were currently under study by the committee. All of us who were members of the transport committee know what I have in mind.

Once committee work became a little dull here in Ottawa the next obvious move was to send 20 or 30 members junketing around the country at great expense, hearing briefs and representations. This had many advantages. It kept at least 11 government members occupied and out of the house, and an almost equal number of opposition members. After all, if there was no obligation to adopt committee reports, to see them translated into legislation, what was better than to entertain government backbenchers at public expense by extended trips around the country? This was at least an appearance of action.

[Mr. Rose.]

However, there seems to be a growing disenchantment with and cynicism about the committee system. Even government members regard some committees as a sham and a waste of time. This is demonstrated by the difficulty some committees have in finding a quorum in order to conduct their meetings. Everyone knows this is not because the opposition members always fail to show up. This is frequently because government members themselves, even though they are members of a committee, do not regard their presence as vital or essential. As a result the committees often cannot meet because they lack a quorum. This could be deliberate although I would not like to suggest that. However, it is a distinct possibility.

What are we going to do now? That is a problem facing the government. What are we going to do with all these talented backbenchers—probably enough to form three cabinets? They are sitting there languishing in gloom. What are we going to do with them? These backbenchers want to speak. They want to get some things they have to say on behalf of their constituents into *Hansard*. They want to send copies of *Hansard* back to the folks at home. In short, they are jealous of the opposition exposure, or the opportunity of the opposition to be exposed to the press and broadcasters during the debates in the house.

These members voice their frustrations in caucus. They want to know what is going to be done. The result is rule 75c. What does this accomplish for government backbenchers? The answer is abundantly obvious. It establishes time limits, and when you have time limits you, Mr. Speaker, are required to recognize hon. members in proportion to the strengths of their parties in the house.

So if a four hour time limit is imposed by the fiat of 75c, the preponderance of speakers will come from the government side. Well over half, or over two of the four hours, will be taken up by spokesmen from that side. This will give government backbenchers more opportunity to take part in the debate. Every time we have time limits, speakers favorable to the government point of view will crowd the debate. This is what 75c is all about. I have not seen many backbenchers from the government side on their feet during this debate. Speakers have come mainly from the opposition. Rule 75c will give the government backbenchers more time and will alleviate their frustration as a result of their being silent minions of the government.

What will be left to the opposition of this four hours if the government takes up more