

*Procedure Committee Report*

How does the present system work, what is wrong with it and how should it be changed? I think the hon. member for Port Arthur (Mr. Fisher) put his finger on the basic difficulty regarding the work of committees. The government does not have to accept the final report of a committee, and in fact very rarely does the government accept a committee's final report and act upon it. I do not blame the government for this attitude because it must accept responsibility for every action it takes. For that reason it cannot be bound by recommendations of a committee.

**Mr. McLraith:** Would the hon. member permit a question for the purpose of clarification? Is he suggesting that the government rarely accepts the reports of committees? Is the hon. member attempting to indicate that governments do not accept committee reports by moving concurrence in them? It is my observation that almost invariably committee reports are acted upon, although rarely accepted by a formal motion for concurrence. Perhaps the hon. member would clarify his statement.

**Mr. Horner (Acadia):** I did clarify my suggestion. We all realize that governments move concurrence in committee reports, but very rarely does a government act upon a committee's report. Under the rules as they now stand a government is not required to act upon the recommendations of a committee. This situation will not be changed by the proposals contained in the report of the committee now being considered. Therefore the committees of the house will have no more power than they now have. I may be wrong in that suggestion, but that is my understanding after reading this report. The committees will have no more power.

The previous speaker suggested that members of parliament would be members of one committee only, and alternative members of other committees. I suggest that this will limit hon. members' active participation in the business of government. Hon. members will be confined in their activities to one committee. I find that I am somewhat limited at the present time, perhaps, because I do not have a sufficiently broad outlook in respect of various subjects, but these proposed changes will not help me in that regard. I suggest the changes will limit the participation of hon. members in committee work, and will have a limiting effect on the activities of those members who are now spreading their knowledge and abilities over a rather wide area. I cannot see how these

proposed changes will help in this regard. Mr. Speaker, any limiting effect that these changes will have will tend to make hon. members less efficient servants of the people they represent.

The hon. member for Port Arthur dealt at some length with the suggestion that the government is not proposing useful changes. He also discussed the fact that a government will not be required to accept a committee recommendation. I do not think any government in the future will necessarily be required to accept a committee's report. Governments must be responsible for their actions, and for that reason should not be required to carry out recommendations made by committees with which they are not in agreement.

This afternoon we heard a great deal of discussion as to how the rules could be changed to facilitate the passage of estimates in the house. It is perhaps of interest to note that during at least a part of the discussion regarding these changes not one member of the cabinet was in the chamber, nor was one member of the privy council in his seat. I can only gather from that situation that they are happy with the way things are now. As the hon. member for Port Arthur has suggested, the government must feel that it can now go to the country and inform people that they have been obstructed during this parliamentary session, and for that reason more has not been accomplished. I suggest that the difficulty we have experienced during this session is directly related to poor management on the part of the government.

Today is the 237th day of this session. It is true we have accomplished quite a bit, but we could have accomplished a great deal more if the business of this house had been proceeded with in a more orderly manner. This could have been done if legislation had been thoroughly thought out and prepared before it was presented to this house.

Time and time again the government has proposed certain things, then withdrawn those proposals and scrapped them. Often the same proposals have been presented again to the house, and again withdrawn. I suggest this has not created any confidence on the part of members in this government. Surely in light of that record hon. members cannot be expected to accept everything proposed by this government. How could we accept anything proposed by this government without very carefully examining it, in view of this government's reputation for quick withdrawal