

Procedure Committee Report

Mr. Pearson: I did not draw that interpretation from the recommendations. Perhaps the chairman would be able to explain that point.

Mr. Fisher: May I ask a question. Has the Prime Minister any ideas about the disposal of committee reports, and what would be the attitude of the government to make sure that reports of all committees were at least handled by the house at some time, either dismissing them or recommending action?

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, I could not possibly give the assurance—and I do not think the hon. member could either, if he were over here—that all committee reports, all reports on private bills and all kinds of committee reports could appear before the house. I cannot give that assurance, but that would invariably be the case.

Mr. Fisher: My next question is: Has the Prime Minister any ideas on ways in which the government or the house could suggest a formula to the house on how committee reports could be dealt with so that we are not left with the sort of vagueness, and many times the death, of committee reports if the government or the house leader does not choose to act upon them?

Mr. Churchill: What do you do with a vague committee report?

Mr. Pearson: I do not think I have enough specific knowledge to make any useful contribution to that particular question. Is that not something which could be discussed by the committee on procedure? I know what my hon. friend is worried about. He thinks reports can be locked up, and locked up indefinitely, and he wants to avoid that. Perhaps that is something which the committee itself should consider.

Mr. Olson: I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether he implied or intended to suggest that there should be an amendment to the motion to send the report back to the committee with instructions. By the way, I welcome that.

Mr. Pearson: I do not think any such motion is required. This report is before us. It is on the order paper. As I understand it, though I am subject to correction, the committee can meet again and produce another report. That report can be called and the next report can be based on the discussion which we have had of this report, without amending or disposing of this report at the present time in any way.

[Mr. Thompson.]

Mr. Olson: Except that it would require the unanimous consent of the house to suspend it from day to day till the end of the session.

Mr. McIlraith: No, it would not.

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I feel quite sure that most, if not all, members of this house not only welcome the report which we are discussing but will also endorse the interest expressed by the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) in the task of implementing the recommendations in the report. I do not believe there are any members of this house who do not feel that parliament is the central pivot of a democracy, whatever may be its deficiency. I assume there are no members of this house who are not anxious to see implemented changes in our rules and procedures, in order that parliament may be more effective in its service to the public and—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Apparently the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona wishes to speak on a point of order.

Mr. Nugent: Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that it is your custom to recognize one member from each party, and then repeat the process. However, I noticed that Your Honour went down the list and recognized two Liberal members in succession, but the second was the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) and I did not object. The floor was then yielded to hon. members who wished to ask questions and I thought Your Honour was about to recognize me in the regular order. However Your Honour recognized the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin), but I thought you did so in order to allow him to ask a question. Would Your Honour be good enough to straighten us out in this regard?

Mr. Speaker: I can assure the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona that I took the precaution of making a survey of hon. members who wished to speak, as well as one can under the circumstances. I asked two hon. members on my list, who are Conservative members, whether they wished to speak. One of those members is not here tonight and he was the next on my list. The other, who is a senior member, did not decide to take the opportunity of speaking. The hon. member for Greenwood sent his name in to me some time ago. It is a little difficult to be exact in this type of debate, but I try to be as fair as possible. I am counting on the