

*Procedure and Organization*

in a clear position to come to a decision concerning on which side of the argument their interests lie.

To attempt to take this proposed method of establishing the will of the majority in respect of the allocation of time for the ordinary processing of business in the interests of the people of this country, I submit is to invite disaster for this institution and to make virtually impossible the free exchange of ideas between the representatives of the various political groupings in this house. If I have time, I should like to quote one other extract from the debates to which I have referred. It has to do with the use of what is commonly referred to as closure.

• (8:50 p.m.)

The speech was made by a member who was at that time in the political group with which I sat in the house. He was considered, under the particular circumstances that prevailed and the atmosphere of the house at the time, to be rather heretical in making the speech. I refer to the former hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway, Mr. MacInnis, who if I recall correctly came to this chamber against the advice of his doctor to make his speech. At the beginning of his remarks the hon. member said:

This is the first word that I have uttered in this debate—

He went on to say:

—and I would not have risen now if it had not been for what has happened since this house opened today. At the opening of the house the Prime Minister made a statement that after we had disposed of the motion before us, then we could proceed with debating the bill.

Later in his remarks, which are reported at page 4377 of *Hansard* for May 28, 1956, in connection with closure he said:

What has happened, and this was the initial mistake that was made, was that when the Minister of Trade and Commerce introduced the resolution preceding this bill he also made a motion that closure would be applied. Closure would be applied, why? Because the debate had been obstructed? No, closure was to be applied because the government had set a time limit to the debate and because it was anticipated that there would be obstruction. We do not carry on business in this house on the basis of anticipation.

It seems to me we have heard recent references to this basic principle of parliamentary procedure. The then hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway went on to say:

I have been here for over a quarter of a century and I have never yet seen a Speaker who would make a ruling on an anticipated situation.

[Mr. Barnett.]

However, rulings and decisions have been made and the decisions made today will be the precedents for tomorrow. I suggest to my hon. friends on the Liberal side of the house that they read the speech which their former leader, the late W. L. Mackenzie King, made when he was leader of the opposition in connection with a motion for closure moved in 1932.

The hon. member said later:

What has happened is that from now on any time the government introduces a resolution preceding a bill and there is some talk that the opposition is opposed to it—that is why the opposition is here; it is their duty to obstruct from time to time; that is their right. I have seen my friends over here put on a filibuster.

He was referring to the then Social Credit group from Alberta. The hon. member went into the whole question of the rights of the opposition in relation to debate in the light of what had been happening regarding the question of closure being moved on the basis of anticipation rather than on the basis of the fact. In another part of his remarks, the hon. member had this to say:

I think the initial issue in this debate is the question of closure. May I tell hon. members, government members, official opposition members, C.C.F. members and Social Credit members, that I favour closure. The government has a perfect right—not only a right but a duty—to invoke closure at the right time; that is, when it has been demonstrated that the business of the house cannot be carried on in any other way but by closure. I said I am in favour of closure. I am in favour of closure, old style. I am not in favour of closure, new style. I do not believe that the members of this house, I do not believe that the members of the government understand, indeed I cannot believe that the Prime Minister understands what has happened.

I think those remarks are applicable to the present situation. It seems to me that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the government house leader cannot understand what they are seeking to do in the context of the motion, and the proposal in the amendment moved earlier today which we are now considering. If it had not been for certain developments in the sequence of events, the proposal might very well be before us now as a direct motion of the government house leader.

I hope that private members on both sides of the house will give some thought to these issues. There are not very many members in the house who have personal knowledge of the previous attempt of the government to use its power nakedly to alter the basic facts of this institution. As I look across the way, the only hon. member I can see on that side of the house who was present at that time is the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. MacEachen). I suggest that he should do