

*House of Commons Procedures*

almost by tradition here. I assume the hon. Member for Broadview (Mr. Hahn) has a closer relation with the Ministers than we have. He has a party caucus within which he can operate. He has an open sesame to the departments which is given to him by the administration. He can go on the hustings and say: My Government did this; our leaders have brought in these plans. The rest of us cannot do these things and it would seem to me that these perquisites, if one may call them that, in being a backbencher supporting the Government are some kind of compensation for the fact that the tradition here calls for Government Members to sit silent and allow the Prime Minister to be their spokesman in arguing the case, presenting legislation and defending the government.

**Mr. Gray:** If the hon. Member's proposition is accepted, would he and the rest of his party undertake not to criticize Government Members who refrain from taking part in debates on the ground that they remain silent instead of participating?

**An hon. Member:** Why don't you stand up, now?

**Mr. Fisher:** The hon. Member will not, of course, expect any answer to a question such as that. I personally have always felt it was unfortunate that Government Members did not feel free to get up more often. I think everyone in the Opposition relishes a Government Member who will get up and speak against something that is going forward. I am not one who would wish to taunt the Government when someone kicks over the traces. I recall the hon. Member for St. Lawrence-St. George (Mr. Turner) was critical of the Minister of Finance with regard to surplus stripping. I recall that the hon. Member for York East (Mr. Otto) has been critical of the Government on a number of occasions. I am not suggesting there is no role for individual Members. They should have their opportunity. But let us not accept this fifty-fifty idea.

**Mr. Gray:** May I ask the hon. Member a question?

**Some hon. Members:** Oh.

**Mr. Gray:** If he does not want to accept the question—

**Some hon. Members:** Ask it, then.

**Mr. Fisher:** I assume the hon. Member has let the question drop. That was my main point with regard to this division of time.

[Mr. Fisher.]

With regard to the other points which have been raised during this discussion, particularly by Members of the Official Opposition who have been speaking to this resolution for the last number of days, I would say this. Having read their remarks, it seems to me the burden of them is simply that they do not trust the Government. They do not trust this Government. They do not trust the Liberals.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Fisher:** Therefore, as the hon. Member for the Northwest Territories (Mr. Rhéaume) put it so well, the confidence which might exist with regard to this solution does not exist in their minds. I want to express almost exactly the same feelings. I do not trust this particular gang. I do not think they deserve trust. I am very suspicious of a party which has a leader who goes around talking about new politics but whose new politics are always evoked at some party rally where they can be used to club the other guy and be a good fellow with applause built into the situation. If we are to have new politics as adumbrated by the Prime Minister, I should like to see more assurance of it than the right hon. gentleman gave in this House before five o'clock when his speech was filled with such lofty sentiments about the future before us if these rule changes came into force.

But having referred to my suspicion that there is a built-in arrogance on the benches opposite which goes back to the golden days of that particular group I have to concede one important point, and my hon. friends agree with me in this regard. It is that this Parliament, like the previous one, has not been moving through its business with any kind of alacrity or assurance. Suspicious as we may be of the Government and dismayed as we may be by its boondoggling and ineffectiveness in handling Parliament, we recognize that something must be done about this situation. That is why, though we stand to lose most by these rule changes in terms of opportunity to speak, we stand ready to support the first resolution in principle and the second resolution in principle, with some disagreement and hoping that our efforts to amend the second resolution will be successful in bringing a little more sense into it.

The last point I wish to raise concerns the question of a permanent Speaker. I wish to express now a view which is my own. I cannot see any great reason to change our present arrangement. If we adopt the idea put