

some agreement as intelligent members of parliament. And we are in agreement on all matters but two, as far as we are concerned.

First—and we have stated our argument in this regard—we oppose and will continue to oppose vigorously closure in advance, the muzzling and gagging of parliament in advance on the authority of not so much a rule but of one man, the government house leader. He is not really the man in charge but is merely the agent of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). I do not say this by way of criticism. As several speakers, including the leader of our party, have said, the house leader on the government side must carry out the will of the Prime Minister. But it is really left to one man under the proposed standing order 16A to decide for how long any matter can be debated. Whether the debate be in a standing committee or in this chamber, one man will carry out the will of the Prime Minister.

I do not need to remind hon. members how eloquently the Leader of the Opposition put the argument against what we say is deliberate dictatorship, or how eloquently other members, particularly the hon. member for York South, have spoken. He said at the beginning of his remarks and repeated at the end that this proposal was what he called a subtle way of obtaining totalitarianism without openly wiping out all opposition.

Let us remember what Edwin Burke said when talking of the function of and need for an opposition. He said:

He that wrestles with us strengthens our nerves and sharpens our skill. Our antagonist is our helper.

The hon. member for York South was every bit as eloquent as Benjamin Disraeli, who stated—and I ask members of the government party, particularly the backbenchers, to note this:

No government can be long secure without a formidable opposition.

The second objection that we make as a party is to the complete abolition of the committee of supply. In brief, this would remove from the House of Commons the consideration and supervision of all expenditures by parliament, and the preventing of overexpenditure by parliament exposing to the light of public opinion wasteful expenditures, or worse.

In the past far too much time has been spent on the consideration of the expenditures of the government in debates on estimates. We say, certainly we should cut down

### *Motion for Concurrence in Report*

that time; we agree with that. But we also say that: by arrangement through the house leaders, certainly not by using proposed rule 16A, one-third of the estimates each year ought to be brought before the House of Commons to be considered by parliament. If that will take too long, let us make it 20 per cent of the estimates. But to do away with the right of parliament to consider expenditures which have risen to almost \$11 billion and let standing committees scrutinize those expenditures is all wrong. When you take away control of the pursestrings from parliament you make the executive all-powerful and reduce parliament to a rubberstamp, as my leader said the other day.

• (3:50 p.m.)

Much has been said about proposed standing order 16A. At this time I wish to direct the attention of the house to the abolition of the committee of supply and the proposal to take away from parliament the examination of expenditures which relate to taxation. The burden of taxation is heavy and is borne by all the people of Canada. In many cases that burden has meant that the living standards of many in this country have fallen below the level we think is necessary for the maintenance of decent homes. Indeed, the heavy burden of taxation is preventing some of our young people from being educated to the point where they are equipped to take their place in our great nation.

The estimates and government expenditures are to be scrutinized by standing committees which are creatures of the House of Commons. We may well ask, What kind of committees are they? How are they formed? At present our committees are totally and wholly partisan. They are purely the instruments of the Prime Minister. How is the chairman of one of our standing committees really chosen, Mr. Speaker? The government house leader knows how. When the Prime Minister or the government house leader wants a certain man to be in charge of a certain committee that may consider questions embarrassing to the government, they pick him to head the committee. He goes to that committee made up for the most part of government supporters and is then nominated and picked as the chairman. That is how their boy is picked by the Prime Minister or the government house leader. The house leader in particular has his hand in these things—he is into everything. So their man becomes chairman of the committee. And how do government members get on this committee or on to