

*Motion for Concurrence in Report*

majority in a committee in which the government would always be in a minority. All this he proposes in the name of section 49 of the British North America Act.

What we are really being told is that there should be some kind of a committee and that if the committee did not come up with a timetable the government would be permitted to do nothing. I wonder whether those opposite who have taken on the responsibility of leading the parties in the house have thought through what kind of pressure that kind of arrangement would put them under. Members would come to them and say, "There is no reason why you should agree to anything in the proceedings committee. If you take a tough stand, we will be able to speak as often as we want and the government will be able to do nothing about it." In that situation either the house leaders would change at a fast rate or the committee would amount to nothing.

We have heard solemn assurances from the Leader of the Opposition and from speakers from other parties on that side of the house that never will there be obstruction to reasonable actions. This is what they say. But what are reasonable actions? They will decide. They will veto decision by this house.

These solemn assurances are made to us again and again. I must say, however, that I can see no reason why I should give any greater credence to those assurances than the Leader of the Opposition insists he gives to my assurances. I suspect that the Leader of the Opposition would admit candidly that he cannot see any reason either.

What is being asserted is really very simple. It is that the opposition knows best. It is that they have an inalienable right to prevent the house reaching decisions they may not like.

**An hon. Member:** That is not right.

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** The hon. member agrees with that.

**An hon. Member:** No. I said that is not right.

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** There have been in the past men in the opposition who have made such assertions. I think perhaps we would be best guided if we again read section 49 of the British North America Act. It reads:

Questions arising in the House of Commons shall be decided by a majority of voices other than that of the Speaker, and when the voices are equal, but not otherwise, the Speaker shall have a vote.

[Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

I suggest that this provision should be the basis for deciding any programming of the business of this house.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would say a few words about the proposed amendment. I note with interest that the Leader of the Opposition has made no effort in the amendment to deal with the government's right to make a motion on its own. His proposed amendment deals only with motions to accept the decisions of the procedure committee, such decisions being, by the definition of the standing order, those which are unanimous. He does not deal in the amendment with our proposal that after consultation the government can introduce its own motion. The only change he of the meetings of the committee on would propose is that there should be notice procedure.

My first reaction to this amendment is one to which I have given expression, namely, that indeed this was not raised and dealt with in the special committee on procedure. This seems to be a reasonable suggestion. It seems to me that if that be the only objection hon. members opposite would make to standing order 16A, it bears very serious consideration, and I would agree that the amendment is a very tempting one to vote for.

**Mr. Baldwin:** Yield to temptation.

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** Before terminating my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I think it would be appropriate if I made some reference to the assistance that was available to the special committee on procedure. In particular I refer to the many long hours and hard work put in by the secretary of the committee, Mr. Philip Laundry, who was ably assisted by Mr. Michael Kirby. Able assistance was also provided under great pressure by Mr. Gordon Dubroy and his colleagues at the table. I think all hon. members would agree with me that we are much indebted to them for their services to the committee.

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

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** On a personal note, Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my own appreciation, and take this opportunity of so doing, to one of our former colleagues in the house who I think it would be acknowledged in all corners of the house has an encyclopaedic knowledge of the procedures of the house and a great grasp of the parliamentary system. I am referring to the former member for Antigonish-Guysborough, Mr. John Stewart. I would like to express my