

Procedure and Organization

the hon. member for Annapolis Valley (Mr. Nowlan)?

Mr. MacEachen: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will entertain it, but I do not know whether I will answer it.

Mr. Nowlan: I am sure he will not answer the question, but I should like to ask it. He made a rousing speech during which he referred to the Labour government in Britain which made rule changes in relation to one day and two hours. Did that government use closure?

Mr. MacEachen: In reference to closure both parties understood the inevitability of parliamentary progress in Britain. They fought and they had a vote. They did not have to apply closure.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. MacEachen: Just to clarify that point, I do not know if there is any way in the British house to apply closure as it is applied in the Canadian house. I do not know if this is provided for there.

Mr. Baldwin: Perhaps the minister would entertain another question. Is it not a fact that the parties reached an agreement to fix the time they were to use in that debate through "the usual channels?"

Mr. MacEachen: If they went through the usual channels why would they have a debate in the house? My hon. friend remembers that last December he put a similar motion which was decided on by a majority. The opposition in Britain would not accept the proposed rules and the motion went to a vote. That is what we ought to be doing now.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

An hon. Member: You are avoiding the point.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I hope the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas) does not mind me reminding him that we are, in theory, supposed to be considering at the present time a point of order under Standing Order 51. I have the impression, which becomes stronger and stronger after listening to speech after speech, that the point of order has been lost in the shuffle.

Mr. Stanfield: Something has certainly been lost.

[Mr. Speaker.]

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I want to support both the hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) and the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) in their appeal to you under Standing Order 51. I want to congratulate the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. MacEachen) for making a 20 minute harangue without ever mentioning that point of order.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Whenever this government is in trouble it brings the Minister of Manpower and Immigration out of mothballs to be its hatchet man.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Now the government can put him back in cotton wool until it is in trouble again, which will not be long.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): As a matter of fact it is fortunate for the minister that the government gets into trouble periodically, because then the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) notices him, and that is something he has not been doing for some time.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I find it difficult to relate the hon. member's remarks to Standing Order 51.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I can understand your concern, but I would point out that the minister in his remarks, allegedly on the point of order, demonstrated the arrogance of this government. He began his speech by saying that the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and the Leader of the Opposition had no right to speak. I took this to be not only a reflection on those two hon. members but, literally, in respect of you, Sir after all, you are still conducting the affairs of the house in spite of the Minister of Manpower and Immigration.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that if you need any direction on how to conduct the deliberations of this assembly you will be