

*Motion for Concurrence in Report*

the third report of the committee on procedure.

The Leader of the Opposition has expressed doubts concerning the possibility for the committees to function properly due to their present limitations and in view of the increase in work which will result from the changes in procedure. I believe the government admits that the organization of committees will be necessary to allow them to operate in a practical and efficient way, for instance, through the provision of a greater number of experts, translators, secretaries, premises, and so on.

Members will soon realize the importance of committees and the necessity of being present at the meetings, but in any event, the evident advantages of this system are worth a try.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to discuss the numerous amendments which have been proposed and which will change considerably the old methods and the present practices of the house regarding matters as important as estimates and the procedure of the ways and means committee to levy taxes, following the proposals contained in the budget, and to authorize government expenditures.

Changing ordinary legislative procedures, and the rules on urgent debates as well as several other changes of lesser importance will enable our parliament to play its true role and to regain the prestige which it must have in the eyes of the people.

Finally, those rules are not immutable and if, in practice, it becomes obvious that some of them cause inconvenience or fail to give the expected results, they can be amended by the house which sets its own rules. Besides, realizing the effects of its recommendations, the committee suggested setting up a standing committee on procedure which could revise the recommendations and complete the work of the special committee. In fact, that committee had only a few weeks to deal with the problems it considered most important and most pressing.

I am confident that with the full co-operation of the members, those changes will not have the disastrous consequences some take pleasure in predicting every time the rules and procedures are changed substantially. Instead, they will result in the adaptation of our parliamentary procedure to the needs of a new and complex world which requires the efficient use of the time of the house during a parliamentary session.

[Mr. Forest.]

[English]

**Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood):** Mr. Speaker, ever since I first became a member of this house I have been a zealous, indeed an impatient advocate for parliamentary reform. I believe, as do most other members, I am sure, that parliament is the supreme instrument of democracy and therefore the best means of bringing about needed changes within society. Therefore I want it to be both efficient and respected.

It has seemed to me that there is in parliament today unnecessary repetition at various stages of debate, that speeches should be shorter as indeed they are in the British House of Commons. The development of a more efficient system of examining legislation and estimates in committees would enable elected members to take a much more meaningful part in the proceedings of parliament than they do at the present time.

It is for these reasons that I deeply regret the government has seen fit to include within the package of parliamentary reform, most of which I can heartily support, the poisonous pill of the proposed rule 16A. To get the desired reform of parliament we are asked to swallow rule 16A. I for one cannot possibly swallow this pill. The reasons for rejection of rule 16A have already been well stated by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) and by the hon. members for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) and York South (Mr. Lewis), among others. They bear repetition.

Rule 16A as it is presently drawn undermines the very institution we are supposed to be improving. Parliament has already been rendered far too impotent by the growth of executive power. This rule would complete that process. By limiting debating time within the sole and arbitrary discretion of the executive, rule 16A would deprive the opposition in parliament of its only real weapon. That weapon is the right to rouse public opposition by reasonable debate in this house. It has been said before that members of parliament might as well go home if this rule is passed because their power to have any reasonable degree of control over the executive by an appeal through debate to the power of public opinion would be virtually removed.

The rule is very sweeping in form. A minister of the crown may propose a motion for the purpose of ordering any arrangement for the calling and allotting of time for the consideration and dispatch of any item or