

Procedure and Organization

I hear hon. members on the other side saying, "But this has been a very reasonable parliament up to this point." Perhaps hon. members are not quite so reasonable now, after the somewhat protracted debate. As I say, if one of the two parties in this house digs in its heels, it will give the other small party the power to veto and thwart the will of the democratically elected majority of the House of Commons.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): And just what have we thwarted?

Mr. Francis: The hon. member for Fundy-Royal (Mr. Fairweather) said in effect, at page 10987 of *Hansard*, that there is nothing left on the order paper and that everything that had to be done has been done.

I have been looking at the order paper, Mr. Speaker, and I see there item 61, second reading and reference to the Standing Committee on Broadcasting, Films and Assistance to the Arts of Bill C-179, to do with broadcasting. The hon. member for Fundy-Royal said the minister is not prepared to move forward with this item. He is mistaken. The minister would be only too delighted to move ahead with this legislation.

Mr. Peters: Go ahead. We will not stop you.

Mr. Francis: I think hon. members of this house will agree that for a long time items have been left on the order paper.

An hon. Member: We will pass that one.

Mr. Francis: I am looking at item 80, second reading and reference to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs of Bill C-198, an act to amend the Canada Corporations Act and other statutory provisions related to the subject matter of certain of those amendments. I know the hon. member for Fundy-Royal will disagree with me, since he said the minister is not prepared to proceed with this, but the minister is. Underneath that is item 81, which is very important. This relates to Bill C-200, an act respecting the expropriation of land. The matter is to be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs, and it is on the order paper because this house has not yet seen fit to deal with it. Then, there is item 85 in the name of the Minister of Finance, items Nos. 87 and 88 also in the name of the Minister of Finance, and a number of other items which represent efforts to reform private members hour and to provide for a means of disposing of cases which have merit.

It has been very difficult to get these matters referred to committees. They stay on the order paper and are not dealt with.

Then we have item 92 in the name of the Minister of Justice. This item relates to a bill to amend the Criminal Code and deals with hate literature. Does the hon. member for Fundy-Royal say that legislation dealing with hate literature is of no consequence and the fact that it has not been dealt with in this session does not matter?

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Will the hon. member permit a question. Since the government may call any item it chooses when Mr. Speaker calls orders of the day, will the hon. member explain why the government would sooner indulge in this protracted debate than call these important items?

Mr. Francis: Mr. Speaker, I will answer that question by developing my argument. Item No. 96 relates to a bill respecting investment companies. Neither items 97 nor 98 have been acted upon. Unless the rules are amended there will be at all times, as the government develops its program and as the house extends its sittings, measures on the order paper to be brought forward. There is a need to deal with these items and a need to come to grips with the government's program. If rules 75A and 75B were allowed to stand alone, without adequate safeguards, either of the small opposition parties would have the power of veto to thwart the rights of the democratically elected majority.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Who vetoed the pensions of retired civil servants?

• (3:30 p.m.)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Fortin: Mr. Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Order. Does the hon. member for Lotbinière wish to ask a question or raise a point of order?

Mr. Fortin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a question to the hon. member, with his permission.

Since the legislative program, according to the hon. member for Ottawa West, is very heavy, does he not agree that the government should impose Standing Order 33, which is of the same nature as rule 75c, so that we can put an end to this futile debate and move on to the legislative program?