

bate and the Budget Debate were reduced by two days in each case, a new procedure on questions was adopted, and Private Members' Business was re-organized.

In 1960-61 and in 1962 all these changes were effected by way of concurrence in the report of a special committee. The proposals were not considered in Committee of the Whole. In all these cases the House itself, with the Speaker in the Chair, debated the committee report. It will thus be seen that while most of the major revisions of House rules were considered in Committee of the Whole, as was quite correctly explained by the honourable Member for Winnipeg North Centre, on a number of other occasions there was, in fact, no provision for debate in Committee of the Whole.

This leads us to the view expressed by the Honourable President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) that rules changes can be dealt with procedurally in one of two ways. He has suggested that either procedure has been acceptable to Honourable Members in the past in changing the Standing Orders of the House. This opinion is borne out particularly by more recent precedents, and especially by those of 1952, 1960-61 and 1962.

It may also be relevant to remind honourable Members that in most cases when major revisions were proposed, these were considered first by a special committee chaired by the Speaker. This occurred, for example, in 1867, 1876, 1927 and 1955. In the case now before us the Speaker did not participate in the special committee. I should add that there must be serious doubt whether the Speaker has the authority to take the action suggested by the Honourable Member for Winnipeg North Centre. After all, the Speaker is guided and bound by existing rules, precedents and practice: he cannot arrogate to himself powers which the House itself has never placed in him.

The honourable Member referred to the flag debate when Mr. Speaker Macnaughton agreed to divide the question then before the House. The decision, however, was based on precedents and citations of Canadian and British authors. These specifically recognize the authority of the Speaker to divide a motion. There appears to be no precedent in Canadian parliamentary practice to support the proposition that the Speaker is at liberty to decree, on his own initiative, that a motion will be considered in Committee of the Whole rather than by the House, or by the House rather than by the Committee.

The honourable Member for Winnipeg North Centre has submitted that the Speaker would have authority to direct that the proposed procedural changes be studied in Committee of the Whole, by virtue of Standing Order 50. Standing Order 50 reads as follows: "Whenever Mr. Speaker is of opinion that a motion offered to the House is contrary to the rules and privileges of Parliament, he shall apprise the House thereof immediately, before putting the question thereon, and quote the Standing Order or authority applicable to the case."

I would not think it could be argued reasonably that the proposed motion is contrary to the rules of Parliament. Is it contrary to the privileges of Parliament? The honourable Member for Winnipeg North Centre contends that it is and that the procedure now contemplated would adversely affect the privileges of honourable Members. The question arises as to whether or not honourable Members would have greater opportunity to debate and amend the report in Committee of the Whole. The scope for debate and amendment, in my view—and I suggest this to honourable Members—is as great with the Speaker in the Chair as it is in Committee of the Whole. There is no limit to the number of amendments that can be proposed at this stage. Each individual proposition may be the subject of an amendment by way of a direction to the special