

*Procedure and Organization*

commend these volumes as required and interesting reading for the next few days or few weeks during which we may have this matter under consideration in this house.

If the government supporters want to understand what their government is attempting to do on this occasion I do not know of any better way they can find it out than by reading these debates. In the parliament of 1956, there were a great many members with a great many years of experience as parliamentarians. Those men, as a result of their own experience and a reading of the debates which have taken place in the past, have had distilled in them a great deal of the essence of what parliament is all about. That is why I feel, as a member of this house, that really in order to come to grips with what is being attempted here perhaps there should be some reference to some of the things which were said during that previous debate about the meaning of this institution. If I may I should like to trespass on the time of the house just to quote one or two excerpts from the debate. I shall quote from page 4512 of Hansard for May 31, 1956. I shall quote the right hon. member for Prince Albert, (Mr. Diefenbaker) but this was before he acquired that particular title. He also quotes another distinguished parliamentarian.

Mr. Diefenbaker was speaking after the Prime Minister, the Right Hon. Louis St. Laurent, had moved a motion that the consideration of clauses 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, the title of the said bill, and any amendments proposed there-to shall be the first business of the committee and shall not be further postponed. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) made a brief reference to this situation this afternoon when he mentioned that a few words had been read from the notes about clauses 1, 2 and 3 and that they were then considered to have been debated. There was some debate on clause 4 and clauses 5, 6 and 7 were never even called. The argument here is how you can have further consideration of something which has not been considered. Mr. Diefenbaker said:

I am going to quote one who has a distinguished son as a member of this cabinet. In 1932 the late Right Hon. Ernest Lapointe, the leader from the province of Quebec whose successor is the Prime Minister, had this to say as reported on page 1497 of *Hansard* for that year:

"It means that parliament is being asked to abrogate its position as the predominant factor in legislation. It means that we are being asked to agree to be dragged at the wheels of the Prime Minister and to make parliament an appendage of the executive."

Mr. Harris: He was not talking about closure.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I will read it all.

"This attitude of the Prime Minister makes our duty to resist this legislation more imperative."

I am glad the minister suggested that because it is more applicable having regard to the Prime Minister's conduct in the last day or two.

"The first duty of parliament is to remain a parliament, not to become a subservient and ornamental body. Parliament has a right which is certainly paramount to the convenience of the Prime Minister, the right to live."

May I interpolate, it is also superior to the frustration of a prime minister.

"It has the duty to defend itself and not to allow anybody to invade its rights and privileges. It is the will of parliament, not that of the government that is the will of the nation. When the Prime Minister says that he speaks for the whole of the country, he is mistaking the echo of his words for the voice of the Canadian people. It is parliament which is and must remain the authorized exponent of public opinion and of the public will."

And then later on:

"The sovereignty of the people is delegated to parliament, not to the executive, and when I say "parliament", it means the minority as well as the majority in parliament."

Later on, he quotes the following remarks made by the Right Hon. Ernest Lapointe:

"What he would conceive as a parliament is that we should stand at attention and salute when the Prime Minister wants us to do so, a parliament that would be ready to goose-step at the behest of the Prime Minister. Sir, the methods of the czar have produced bolshevism, and we do not wish to introduce that in Canada. It is an evil work. I claim, on the part of those who are in this way undermining the authority of parliament—"

I submit that is precisely what the government house leader of this parliament is attempting to do by putting forward the proposal in this way. I suggest we already have in our rules a way to arrive at a majority decision so far as allocation of time is concerned or so far as termination of debate is concerned. I submit in this initial effort on the part of the Canadian parliament to put into its rules an arrangement for allocation of time of debate, the waters should not be muddied by bringing into the picture the unilateral authority of the government to make the decision in its name concerning when and how a debate will be terminated, unless it is prepared to use the rules we already have and unless it feels it can establish before the people of Canada that there has been a clear case of obstruction. Then, and only then, and under the proper circumstances do I believe that kind of motion should be made in this house. Then, the people of Canada would be