

Proposal for Time Allocation

• (8:40 p.m.)

Standing order 15A was introduced on June 11, 1965, when the house agreed to certain amendments further to various reports of the committee on standing orders, on which it was my privilege to serve.

When this amendment was passed, there was considerable discussion in the house. Needless to say, the special committee on standing orders, after sitting nearly a year, had seriously considered the advisability of amending standing orders.

This afternoon, I heard the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam (Mr. Douglas), leader of the New Democratic party, recite once again the list of suggestions his party favours for the proper conduct of the business of the house.

I think it was the hon. member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Olson) who remarked that these suggestions have already been made. Personally, I have no objection to the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam or any other making suggestions to improve the proper functioning of the house.

Obviously, it was almost a repetition of the press release dated September 22, 1964, by the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam. I found a copy in my files and I read it during the supper hour.

However, I have noted that the government had implemented a number of the proposals made by the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam on September 22, 1964. If the government has not yet been able to find the miracle solution to get ahead with the business of the house, then let each and every one of us blame only himself.

The right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson), following those proposals put forward by the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam, had answered on September 23, 1964, that he was very pleased to have the support of that hon. member as far as reform of the parliamentary procedure was concerned.

The Prime Minister repeated this afternoon that a system of allocation of time must be set up for the debates of the house, so that it might consider urgent matters.

Thus, after all the proposals made previously, the government finally submitted to the house amendments to the procedure in 1965. After a lengthy debate, most of those proposals were passed on June 11, 1965, including this standing order 15A about the allocation of time for consideration of any legislation.

I understand the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill) when he says that the business committee has not met perhaps as often as it should have. As I said earlier, however, there may be a lack of sincerity and good will, since the house had agreed to provide in its standing orders a means to cope with the present situation.

That the government should have decided as a last resort to apply to existing rules and standing order 15A in order to allocate time for the study of Bill No. C-243 should not come as a surprise, and all members present must admit that a decision has to be reached with regard to that bill.

I understand that it will likely not meet everybody's wish, but after hearing quite a large number of speeches by the official opposition, some of which were quite thorough and others maybe less interesting and repetitious, I think that a solution had to be found and that the hon. leader of the government had no alternative but present the motion which he moved today.

Mr. Speaker, I should like, however, to make a suggestion and voice a personal opinion; if we do not want too much bitterness to prevail following this debate, it might be a good idea to come to an agreement and set clause 2 aside and go on with the study of the other clauses of the bill.

Under this motion, examination of the bill will have to come to a conclusion, and a vote will be taken, and without anticipating the result of that vote, I have no doubt that we shall vote on that question in the very near future.

I feel that it is in the interest of the country that we, as members, should have the opportunity to study the other clauses of this bill.

If the house decides that this motion is to become operative, I see no other logical solution, Mr. Speaker, than to agree to suspend consideration of clause 2 and proceed immediately with the other clauses of this bill.

I think we would show maturity in following this course.

[*English*]

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, anything I had intended to say in this debate must be changed to some extent as a result of the intervention and of the interesting observations made by the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) this afternoon. He said then what I have heard on so many occasions from