

Motion for Concurrence in Report

changing the structure of the House of Commons. I think all members recognize that there are going to be vast changes both in government and in the House of Commons. However, as I said yesterday, there is nothing sanctimonious about us. We will be replaced by a different breed of career M.P.'s. A lot of policy decisions are going to be made by constituents through the regional desks, and I am certain they will be very beneficial.

Mr. Orlikow: Tell us about the regional desks.

Mr. Otto: You can read about them. My point is that there has to be change. Hon. gentlemen who have been here for 20, 15 or in some cases for even 10 years must recognize that there is nothing sacred about the rules that they know so well. It is always difficult for the older members who are experienced in the application of certain rules to accept new ones, because they are experts on the old rules but not on the new ones.

I welcome these changes. The sooner we make this house a house of legislation and not merely a house for debate, the better. All of these changes work toward that end. This house will be able to deal with more legislation. We will have eight or nine months for debate, longer than is the case now. We can debate all issues. The opposition parties will be able to bring forward those subjects they want to debate but which they are unable to debate now. The only thing lacking will be power to harass and to delay. The people of Canada do not want the opposition to filibuster or delay; they want them to contribute in an effective way. This they will be able to do under the new rules in the committees provided the committees are given some real strength.

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, like other members who have taken part in this debate I am pleased to have this opportunity as a member of parliament to speak on parliamentary reform.

As the last speaker said, I do not think that anybody would argue, at least not on this side of the house, about our being in favour of reform. The Conservatives believe in parliamentary reform. We believe in reform now and not tomorrow. Why do I say this, Mr. Speaker? Because members of our party, together with other members of the opposition and members of the government, have for a number of years worked together harmoniously as members of special committees

[Mr. Otto.]

on reform, initially established under a former Speaker, the hon. Alan Macnaughton, and then later under you, sir. Finally, the special committee on procedure was established to formulate a set of rules that would make parliament more effective in this new age that demands that decisions be made with compelling haste.

The first point I want to make is that all members agree with reform. The members of this party agree with all the rules that have been brought in by the special committee on procedure with the exception of two recommendations. Members of other parties agree with them all with the exception of just two points or perhaps one. So as I say that we are all in favour of reform, with the exceptions I have mentioned.

I should like to point out that if the government in all its wisdom were to compromise on those two recommendations the report presented by the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Blair), the chairman of the special committee, would be approved at this moment and we could get on with the country's business. As I have said, there is no argument that the members of this party agree with the reforms presented in the report with the exception of two.

I suggest that no party alone can declare that it is the party of reform because, as I said at the beginning of my remarks and as I shall repeat often, there has been a harmonious working arrangement toward this end on the part of members of all parties who have sat together on committees from time to time. I too have had the opportunity of representing my party on one of the earlier committees established to consider reform. Much of what the first committee recommended, much of what the second committee recommended, and much of what was contained in the provisional rules has been approved by the special committee on procedure, as outlined by my good friend and fellow graduate from the same university, the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield), both in this debate and on other occasions, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) and, last but not least, the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis), have all stated that they are in accord with reform. So no problem arises there. We all want changes and we have all compromised our ideas about what kind of changes should be made in order to come to