

Procedure and Organization

house concerning the failure of the committee chairman to move concurrence in his report as he had been instructed to do. The President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) I am sure knew, or certainly should have anticipated, that such a motion was coming and that we would be prepared to discuss it for some time.

The President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) withdrew the government order. Yes, he withdrew the government order standing in his name only because he wanted to keep 75c before the house, not because he cares one iota for the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Blair) personally or as chairman of a committee, or for the committee system, for that matter. I ask any fair minded member opposite, especially those who saw the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) in his office on Tuesday morning, if the government is so casually willing to see one of its prominent backbenchers destroyed and to contribute positively to his destruction. Can anyone blame the members of the opposition for trying to hold on to the few prerogatives we have left in this house? Indeed, can anyone blame the opposition for being very wary of this government when hon. members on the backbenches opposite a few weeks ago had to send in their dear wives to plead with the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) for fairness and justice?

Rule 75c—what a grim and pathetic thing it is that this should be the triumphant climax to the first year of the just society. I do not for a moment believe that there are any new members, not one of them, who ever thought that the just society would come to this.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Look who is coming out of the mineshaft.

Mr. Stanfield: I do not for a moment believe that hon. members who are fair and objective do not know perfectly well in their own hearts that the government has—

An hon. Member: I think he is going to make another speech.

Mr. Stanfield: I hope so. That will be the first indication that the government is caving in. He will make a strong plea in favour of the government's position and then the government will yield.

Mr. MacEachen: Tell your friends in the New Democratic party.

Mr. Stanfield: Hon. members who are fair and objective know perfectly well in their hearts that the government has not been pre-

[Mr. Stanfield.]

vented by the opposition from bringing in the kind of creative and useful legislation that had been hoped for, and if any such legislation is ready we should be discussing it now.

Hon. members, especially the new members on the other side, know in their own hearts that it is not parliament that is destroying the reputation of the government and the governing party. Hon. members know from talking to their own constituents and their own friends who are not in politics how it happened that the just society, so-called, is becoming a term of derision, indeed a term of contempt.

• (4:00 p.m.)

Mr. Hees: All they have to do is read the Gallup polls. That tells them.

Mr. Stanfield: It is our duty to fight. I point out to hon. members that the fight has already had considerable success because the retreat of the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald)—I hope he will bring himself to listen to this because he may learn something—

Mr. Harkness: That is not likely.

Mr. Stanfield:—was not just a procedural retreat. The President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) was forced to withdraw his motion; he was forced to change his method of proceeding. There was a procedural change in that sense. But the change that took place when the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) yielded was not just a procedural change, because what we are now being asked to accept in the form of the adoption of the committee's report is substantially different from the proposal the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) put before the house.

Hon. members will remember that the committee's report contains three separate recommendations, 75A, 75B and 75c. Proposed Standing Order 75A provides for the allocation of time under a house order when there is unanimous consent among the representatives of all parties in the house. Proposed Standing Order 75B provides, in the motion we are now considering, for cases when there is agreement among the majority of the representatives of the parties. The chairman of the committee argued that this did not mean that the opposition parties, by agreeing, could compel an allocation of time. He argued, and probably properly, that there is no way of compelling a minister to come into the house and act on the agreement reached by the representatives of the opposition parties. That is probably a sound position.