

a slight difference of opinion between the Leader of the Opposition and me over this, maybe we could reconcile it behind the curtain. I deeply share his concern whether or not the reference of all the estimates to standing committees will work. I feel concern for the same reason as he does.

First of all, our committees do not perform in the same way as does the House of Commons in this place. If we load the committees with an abundance of estimates and other work as well, if we fail to accept the recommendation that there be times when the house should adjourn in order that more committees may meet, and if we fail to provide the committees with adequate staff, the system will break down. Nevertheless, I think the proposal is worth a trial if only for the reason that the present system is not working. In support of that last statement I need only refer to what happened at the end of last evening. Hon. members who were present witnessed the approval without question of estimates amounting to billions of dollars in the space of a few minutes. Apart from this, the 19 days we spent in committee of supply on estimates were frustrating. Take this session. Never were we able to pin a minister down and get a satisfactory answer. Never were we able to say: we will not let your estimates through until we get a satisfactory reply. After all, the minister had only to sit tight and count on the efflux of time. The present system is so unsatisfactory that it becomes worth while to try something else. I think that what the committee has recommended is a workable proposal, and it is worth trying.

Some hon. members may ask: are you not aware that if this report is accepted these rules will become permanent and will not apply on an experimental basis? That is true, but in the fifth report we recommended that a committee on procedure and organization be made a permanent committee of the house. We have been given an assurance by the leader of the house that the government itself will give an undertaking during the course of this debate that at the next session of parliament a term of reference will be given to that committee enabling it to review the working of these rules at this session, should they be approved. So there is an element of experiment left, and I think this is what we should do in terms of supply.

Perhaps I have now spent enough time on the things in the report which are good. I thought I owed it to the house to say what I have said and that I also owed it to myself to

#### *Motion for Concurrence in Report*

say that 90 or 95 per cent of this report—I do not know how one measures these things mathematically—is good, good not only because it means change but good because it tries to cope with the main problem facing us, that is to say, the proper use of our time.

Having got all these things in the special committee—and I am referring now both to ourselves and to the government side—the government was not satisfied. I would point out that chronologically speaking we did not get this proposed standing order 16A until we had agreed to most of the rest of these proposals. It might be thrown back at me that we could not agree earlier in the meetings of the committee on a programming arrangement, so it was put off until the end. But the fact of the matter is that after we had agreed to a scheme which abolishes the committees of supply and ways and means, after we had agreed to cutting out the debate on the resolution stage of all bills, after we had agreed to cutting out debate on the resolution stage of the budget, after we had agreed to give the government special powers to bring in emergency measures and so on, the leader of the house came before the committee with the proposed standing order 16A and the suggestion that a committee on procedure be formed and given the powers outlined in the wording which is now before us.

One of the reasons some of us feel annoyed about this is that it seems to us our own words are being prostituted. Time and time again I have argued for the planning of the parliamentary year. I have used the word "calendarizing" to describe the process we ought to follow. It is being done, in part, in the proposed arrangements for supply. But the fact that we have argued for the planning of the parliamentary year does not give the government the right to come along with a proposal which completely takes away the rights of members of parliament and then try to tell us that the government is simply implementing our own ideas.

What does standing order 16A do? The Leader of the Opposition will forgive me if I go over some of the ground he has covered, but no doubt it will be covered again a few times until the government recognizes the validity of our argument and realizes that this report, at least so far as 16A is concerned, ought to be turned back to the special committee for review and for change. Standing order 16-A proposes that there be a committee on procedure, presumably made up of the four party house leaders, which would meet