

Procedure and Organization

to blame and the fault lies with the interpreters, I do not know has spoken of the "minor parties" when referring to the Ralliement créditiste and the New Democratic party.

Mr. Speaker, I must say that speaking in this manner of those two parties in the house is disparaging and a violation of our privileges.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Order, please. The hon. member has just made his opinion known and the question of privilege does not arise.

Mr. Fortin: Mr. Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): The hon. member for Lotbinière.

Mr. Fortin: Mr. Speaker, I had not completed my explanation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Is the hon. member rising on a point of order or on a question of privilege?

Mr. Fortin: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

I wish to point out that I had not concluded my remarks.

When someone says that we belong to "minor parties", that implies, in a disparaging sense, that we do not represent the whole population across the country. The same remark would apply to the New Democratic party. I believe that we should be referred to as "minority parties".

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Order.

[*English*]

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): I would point out to the hon. gentleman that the categorization of his party as a small party was not imposed on his party by me but rather was imposed upon them by the electors of Canada.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): You represent a minority of the electors.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): This is a very interesting argument because if the hon. gentleman and his colleagues are really in favour of a system of proportionate representation they should be advocating that when they stand at the polls. Of course they have not advocated any such thing. I am sure that nobody is denying, for example, the former hon. member for Selkirk the right to form the government of Manitoba because he happens to represent such a minor fraction of the total vote cast in that province. So this applies both ways.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): You are not showing your elegance.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): I am not indeed. It would be interesting to remark on the comments made in anticipation of the debate by a newspaper which is not unfriendly to the hon. gentleman opposite. Indeed, it was referred to favourably by both the hon. members for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) and Swift Current-Maple Creek (Mr. McIntosh) yesterday, although not on this subject. I am referring to the *Toronto Telegram* of Friday July 4, 1969, and its lead article entitled "The Battle Of The Rules". It commences in this way:

Conservative and New Democratic M.P.s aren't likely to elicit much public sympathy if they continue to delay approval of new parliamentary rules that will empower the government to limit House of Commons debates—

Despite the criticism of rule 75c, it seems to be reasonable. For, in effect, it has two main objectives that remove it from the category of closure. It would preserve the power of the opposition long enough to arouse public opinion. At the same time, it would enable the government to bring an issue to a decision within a reasonable period.

To suggest, as some Opposition M.P.s have, that the passage of rule 75c would degrade parliament and make it a rubberstamp of the executive, is stretching matters.

I suggest that, given the usual inflation in debate which occurs, this is a pretty fair statement of the situation by a newspaper which, as I said, has not been known to be uncritical of this government.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): What does the *Ottawa Citizen* say?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): You have it, so you should know.

Mr. Fairweather: I have it and I will read it to you in a minute.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): I am glad that we will be entertained by the hon. member for Fundy-Royal (Mr. Fairweather).

While it is the essence of our parliamentary system that the opposition must have an opportunity to criticize government measures, it is also essential that after debate the house should be permitted to come to a decision. Unhappily, the Canadian House of Commons has acquired the habit in recent years of opposition by delay, and experience in recent years indicates that with this habit the increasingly heavy legislative work load which our house must face is met not by analysis and criticism but merely by delay.