

Canada Grain Act

that the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture was tabled.

I think there is a very interesting point developing here due to the fact that in the Standing Orders there is also a rule which suggests that any amendments to be debated on report stage must be filed 24 hours before the subject matter comes up for debate. If we are assuming that the committee report to the House of Commons is the beginning of the 48 hours then we are robbing—I say robbing in the full meaning of the word—the 24 hour period which is now available to Members of Parliament to study the bill on the Order Paper.

This bill came on the Order Paper only on Monday, yesterday. We should have 24 hours to prepare amendments. I argue that it was the original intent of the rules that the bill be on the Order Paper for 24 hours, and in that 24 hour period members could prepare amendments and submit amendments.

After the 24 hours have elapsed, if the bill is to come up 48 hours exactly after it has been placed on the Order Paper, then the bill may come before the House. But if we accept the idea of the 48 hour period as mentioned in Standing Order 75(3), then I say Members of Parliament have to be prepared the very minute a committee brings in its report on a given bill to the House, before they see a reprint of the bill with whatever amendments the committee may have made. If they want amendments to be in order for debate on report stage, they have to file them on that same day.

A very important precedent may be established through this ruling. I contend that it is not fair to the Members of Parliament who sit on the backbenches of any political party that they have to pick up *Votes and Proceedings* for Friday, June 26, which is not even printed yet. On Friday, June 26 the chairman of the committee, or in this case the deputy chairman, brought in the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture. But *Votes and Proceedings* for June 26 was not printed on June 26. It was printed only on June 27, and it has all the listed amendments. However, the listed amendments are not in their proper place in the bill.

So, we are saying that the 48 hour period mentioned in the rules begins with the chairman bringing in the report, and we are establishing a very interesting precedent. We are also establishing another interesting precedent in the fact that if a government really wanted to hurry things up it might be better

to adjourn for a week and come back, because in that intervening period the 48 hours are used up to some extent and members are robbed of their 24 hour period for filing amendments. By coincidence one could argue that that is exactly what happened in this case. If the government wished, it could say that the 24 hour period disappeared in the summer holidays, and that amendments had to be filed on Monday or even before Monday. If this precedent is established, it represents one more erosion of the free expression of thought which must always be available in the House of Commons.

If free expression of thought is not available in the House of Commons, then I say to parliamentarians that they have only themselves to blame for disruptions in the street. Such will happen if you do not give full vent and full opportunity for the expressions of thought by elected representatives in this place. A very important precedent is being established here, and I could not let it go without expressing due warning and concern to the Speaker and to all members of the House.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) has brought up an important procedural question and I think it will be of value to have the guidance of your ruling on this point. As to the substance of the matter I think the hon. member, if I understood him correctly, said that *Votes and Proceedings* for June 26 are not yet available.

Mr. Horner: Not on the 26th.

Mr. Bell: Not on that date.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): It certainly was available on June 27.

Mr. Horner: Where were we then? Where was the House of Commons.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): *Votes and Proceedings* containing the committee amendments, published on June 27, has been available to the hon. member in his office for a period of approximately three months, and so I contend that the hon. member has had a full opportunity to consider and reflect on the committee's work. However, that is not really his contention in this particular case. His contention is a narrower one on the interpretation of the rules.

As a matter of fact I think we have to agree that by the practice of the House over