

*Procedure and Organization*

we have gone wrong. What has happened? Where have we gone wrong?

I think an article by Mr. Lubor Zink in the Toronto *Telegram* of July 14 puts the entire matter of rule changes in fair perspective. He writes:

The key to a way out of the impasse is in the wording of the opening sentence which stipulates that rule 75c can be invoked only after a Minister of the Crown "has stated that an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of standing order 75A or 75B."

The catch in this connection is in rule 75b which says that, failing unanimous agreement among the four House leaders under 75A, allocation of time for debate can be decided by "a majority of the representatives of the several parties," i.e., by three of the four House leaders.

In other words, if the opposition groups agree among themselves on time allocation under 75b, the Government cannot truthfully say that "an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of standing order 75A or 75B."

On the other hand, rule 75b in its present form does not make it mandatory for the Government to implement the agreement reached by the House leaders of the opposition parties. It says that "a Minister of the Crown—may propose a motion—" There is nothing to compel him to do so.

Both the Government and the opposition have thus been caught in the ambiguity of the wording of the proposed time allocation rules. Both sides must insist on a redraft of the whole thing which can be accomplished only through agreement.

The Government, which spotted the pitfall too late for correction in the standing committee on procedure and organization, tried to remedy the oversight by the highly irregular procedure of presenting to the House a suitably changed version of the committee's report as its own motion.

The opposition protested so vigorously that the Government House leader, fearing adverse public reaction to the tricky manoeuvre beat a hasty retreat and the report of the committee was presented for debate in its original version.

The problem both sides are facing now is how to get rid of the two-edged ambiguity on mutually acceptable terms.

I hope the house leaders will be able to come to an agreement in the meeting that is about to take place. Much of my remaining material is not relevant, Mr. Speaker, and I will not refer to it now that the house leaders have decided to meet. Nevertheless, perhaps what I am about to say could be a yardstick for the people negotiating on our behalf.

I am probably as unskilled in the technicalities of house rules as is any hon. member here. I am sure I could qualify as a non-expert, if there is such a designation. Nevertheless I suggest that it is not reasonable under 75B to have a majority that does not include the government. In the hope that some of our negotiators may overhear what I have to say I suggest to the government, why

not forget all about 75c? It is unnecessary and unnecessarily restrictive.

Let us change rule 75B so that it clearly indicates that the government must be a party to a majority decision. It must be one of the majority. As Mr. Zink has suggested, the government and opposition are caught by the ambiguity of the wording of the proposed time allocation rule. Let us redraft the whole, dashed thing, Mr. Speaker, remove the ambiguity and make sure that the rule says that the government must be included in the majority. That is only reasonable, I think. I say to the silent service on the government side, do not let three or four power hungry people in your party destroy democracy. Who knows, next time you may get here on your own without having to ride in on someone else's coat tails.

I will close my remarks as I began them, Mr. Speaker, by echoing a worth-while sentiment expressed by the Prime Minister. He said it is not up to a particular man to express the will of this house. I wish he would practice what he preaches.

**Mr. Ray Perrault (Burnaby-Seymour):** Mr. Speaker, I know I speak on behalf of most supporters of the government when I express the hope that negotiations now under way will be productive of results. As most of us who have served in any elected assembly know, if matters relating to rules can be resolved harmoniously the entire institution of democracy benefits.

● (3:40 p.m.)

I say that most of the government members, indeed all of them, feel that way. We hope a fair agreement can be achieved. I must say, Mr. Speaker, I prepared a speech I feel is rather complete. Time will not permit full delivery. Like the last speaker, there are certain paragraphs I think would be best left unsaid under the circumstances.

I wish to spend a few minutes discussing the need for rule changes relating to the limitation on the length of speeches. A point which has been made time and again and, I think, very well by the spokesmen for the various parties, is that the business of the Canadian people must be expedited more effectively. There is no disagreement on this point.

And we all feel, especially those of us who have served at some point in Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, that democracy must never be sacrificed for efficiency. It must never be sacrificed in the name of expediency. This is