

Procedure and Organization

through. I plead with hon. members, particularly with government backbenchers. If they think we of the opposition are being gagged, Mr. Speaker, let me point out that the gag is being put on them too, and they are assisting in putting it on themselves. It could conceivably be that they will be sitting over here and they may also want time—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired. Possibly I might ask the house whether there is unanimous consent for him to continue?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

An hon. Member: No.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): All right; fine. I know where the no is from. This is a bad motion, Mr. Speaker, to adopt the committee report.

● (2:50 p.m.)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Pierre Goyer (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I did not intend to take part in the debate this afternoon, that is why I shall be very brief, but I cannot let pass unnoticed the allegations and suspicions voiced by the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) in this house.

The hon. member for Edmonton West has insisted that the government, and in particular the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), intended to muzzle the opposition and prevent the free exercise of democracy in this house. In addition, he made vague accusations which, when he defined them, were refuted flatly. The hon. member for Edmonton West gave the impression that the Liberal party and its members were muzzled, no less, by the government and by the Prime Minister.

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): It is obvious.

Mr. Goyer: Mr. Speaker, once again, those allegations are vague, especially because they are not based on facts.

How strange to see a member of the opposition complain about the government, and in particular about the Prime Minister, saying that he interferes with hon. members' participation in the debate, that he intends to deprive the opposition of their rights and prerogatives when, just recently, those same parties and specially their leaders received supplementary credits from the government to

[**Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West).**]

enable them to fulfil their role adequately in the house, to do some research and prepare sensible speeches instead of merely making accusations which have nothing to do with the matter now under study.

How strange to see an opposition, that is better equipped today than it has ever been, complain about being muzzled and being ostracized. There's no mistake about it: those who receive are biting the hand that gives to them.

As for us, we have but to congratulate ourselves on the action of the government and on our greater participation not only in committees, or in this house but also in the Liberal party's caucus.

The Prime Minister has taken steps recently that enable us in our caucus to participate much more actively than before in the elaboration of bills and discussion of principles that are to be brought forward in this house.

Moreover, the committees operate better than they used to. They are now provided with better research facilities, especially the committee on external affairs and national defence, which has at its disposal a staff of experts to assist committee members in their work. Here is a move which, far from hindering participation in debates, will help those who wish to contribute in an intelligent way to the business of the house.

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): What happens to the committee reports? Are they shelved?

Mr. Goyer: Perhaps the hon. member for Edmonton West could say how many reports tabled in the house were concurred in instead of always being over-critical and seeking the exceptional cases.

The object of the measure before us is to modernize the workings of our parliamentary institutions. Of course, in days gone by, it was difficult to let the people what was going on since the mass media were not as they are today.

Filibusters had to be accepted in the past, so that people would know about the legislation that was being considered.

Today, when television, radio and newspapers are always present, when journalists give a daily account of what is going on in the house and in the committees every minute, it is normal for the government to want an efficient tool to allow it to expedite the business of the house without for all that keeping the people in the dark.