

certainly be prepared to respect the respective privileges of the legislatures.

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[English]

THE CONSTITUTION

OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS TO MAKE REPRESENTATIONS TO JOINT COMMITTEE

Mr. Doug Neil (Moose Jaw): Madam Speaker, as one who was denied the right to speak in the debate on the constitution, I have been rather disturbed by some of the answers given this morning by the House leader. The Prime Minister gave an undertaking, not only to individual members but to the citizens of Canada, that their representatives would be entitled to speak in this debate. That has been denied us.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neil: My question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister and it is similar to the question put to the House leader. Will I, as an individual member, have the opportunity of making representations to the committee or will I have to be a member of that committee before I can do so? It is a very simple question and I would like an answer.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, the committee will be established. It is master of its own proceedings and it can decide—

An hon. Member: What nonsense!

Mr. MacEachen:—to bring in any member of Parliament. It has been obvious to me for quite some time that members of Parliament who are not members of the committee have been able to be present and have also been permitted to make their views known.

Mr. Neil: I have a short supplementary question. I wonder if the Deputy Prime Minister is prepared to examine the procedure and perhaps make some changes which will guarantee the members of the House of Commons the right to make amendments to the proposed resolution when it is returned to the House.

Mr. Clark: Amendments of substance.

Mr. MacEachen: No, Madam Speaker, I am not proposing to propose amendments to the Standing Orders of the House. The government House leader has already dealt with that question. When the report comes out of the committee, it will be possible for the House to determine what it wishes to do with it. But I am sure the hon. member is sincere in expressing a desire to have his views heard, either in committee or in the House of Commons, and personally I am quite sympathetic to that point of view.

Mr. Neil: Then demonstrate your sympathy.

Oral Questions

Mr. MacEachen: But I suggest to the hon. member that there should be a way to accommodate both the desire of the government to facilitate the passage of this resolution and the desire of hon. members to participate. If his party is prepared to negotiate in good faith in order to make appropriate arrangements in the way described by the House leader, then he will find that we will negotiate in good faith also.

Mr. Clark: That is trickery. Appropriate arrangements on his own terms. That is nonsense.

OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS TO DEBATE JOINT COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Joe Reid (St. Catharines): Madam Speaker, further to the questions asked this morning I should like to add another question and I direct it to the government House leader. From the time of the introduction of this constitutional resolution, we have heard a good deal of glowing comments with respect to fundamental rights and the necessity to entrench those rights against arrogant governments and politicians. We had a fine example of that just recently.

Following the committee's discussions, will I as a member of this House have an opportunity to participate in the debate after the committee has reported to the House, having been one of those who was denied the opportunity by the actions of that arrogant government to speak in this constitutional debate, one in which the Prime Minister invited all members of Parliament to participate?

[Translation]

Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council): Madam Speaker, I repeat that we will show the same open-mindedness as at the first stage, when we asked the Progressive Conservative Party to negotiate a time schedule which would make it possible for a larger number of its members to deal with this issue. Once again, I reiterate this offer. We are willing to negotiate in good faith, as we have always done in the past, and we expect now the Progressive Conservative Party to co-operate even more to make it possible for its backbenchers—I strongly urge the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party to listen attentively to these representations—to express their views. I advise him that I will make offers to his House leader to increase the time allotted for discussion, even adding a few days, if necessary, so that a larger number of hon. members may be heard. I hope, therefore, that we will obtain more serious co-operation, and that good faith will prevail more than it has up to now.

[English]

Mr. Reid (St. Catharines): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the same minister. Since the reason for the introduction of closure was the economic measures that the government wanted to introduce, may I ask why the minister did not introduce those economic measures last week, this week or even today, and why is the Prime Minister not in his place today if these economic measures are so important?