

Procedure and Organization

or a substantial part, is dealt with through the ordinary process of negotiation, with the result that orders allocating time are not the procedures which are usually or habitually employed at Westminster.

The committee on procedure has made a number of recommendations to this house since last fall, and it is my submission that their effect has been to improve our procedure and in many ways to make it easier for ordinary private members in particular to participate in its affairs. It must be borne in mind that the creation of the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization means that the continual review and study of the procedures of the house is now one of our regular concerns. None of the rules which we have adopted or which may be proposed can reasonably be likened to the edicts of Justinian, that is, intended to last for all time and regulate the affairs of all future generations.

It is in this spirit that I commend the report of the standing committee. I trust it will be adopted. It does not violate the ancient traditions and procedures of this house. It has been framed with a proper regard for the prerogatives of members, and its full intent and purpose is to enable the House of Commons in this year 1969 to meet the intense pressures placed on a modern parliament.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, we have listened with great interest to the speech made by the hon. member. Let me say right now that it is our intention to move an amendment to the motion for concurrence which he has made; it will be within the terms approved by the practice and precedents of the house.

I am sorry the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) is not here. The Prime Minister is an expert on traps. When he came back and saw the trap in which the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) had placed himself and his party, it is quite obvious that the hon. gentleman was repudiated. The cork was pulled out of the bottle and out popped the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Blair), who had been waiting patiently, letting his motion stand day after day, wondering what it was all about.

To an extent, I am glad this happened. It is an indication of the way in which, when there is a good and righteous cause, and it is presented strongly enough by the opposition with the support of the public media, the government can be made to see, at least in part, the light of reason.

Thus, while I do not like some of the proposals contained in standing order 75A, B and C, I am glad we are at least proceeding now in the proper manner and that the government has been made to understand even in a limited way that it does have responsibilities, and that it must accept its position as being subordinate to, not superior to, this house.

• (3:20 p.m.)

Before I deal with the substance of the proposal I think it would be helpful to retrace the progress made by this parliament since last September. At that time we were locked in another struggle comparable to this one. We had indicated our willingness to remain here, if necessary, throughout what would normally have been the Christmas recess to make our point. Faced with this overwhelming pressure of public opinion and parliamentary opposition, opposition not only on this side of the house, I am sure, but substantial opposition on the other side as well, the government took the abhorrent and repugnant 16A out of the order that was then before the house for approval.

It was then that the Prime Minister made the statement that the opposition had fallen into a trap, that all he had ever wanted were the rules changes contained within the proposed order, with the exception of 16A. That is the sort of statement that I suggest no responsible man in public life would ever make. In saying this I am bearing in mind that the right hon. gentleman is back again attempting to get approval of, if not rule 16A, a substantial part of the principle therein involved. He is back again trying to peddle the same bad hardware.

What was the course of events after December, Mr. Speaker? The house made good progress. There was co-operation on all sides, as well as understanding. Meetings, both official and unofficial, were held. Meetings in this house were held of the kind that never take place in the United Kingdom parliament. I think the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) will agree with me that we were amazed to learn of the sort of running discussions held by the house leaders and others involved. Sensing the mood of the house, the needs of the day and the requirements of government in coming to day-to-day decisions, are conditions precedent to the proper operation of a legislative body. Such procedures are not followed in the United Kingdom. I am not going to go into the details of their alternative, which is something