

*Procedure and Organization*

those who uttered them, words like "restriction of freedom", "dictatorship", "the extinction of parliament", and all the rest. Yet, paradoxically, the same government which members in the opposition attack with such vigour, voted the opposition a quarter of a million dollars in research funds, made available to opposition backbenchers and which were not available to government backbenchers. This was done so that opposition members could do a better job in the House of Commons.

**Some hon. Members:** Shame.

**Mr. Stanfield:** I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker I know the hon. member does not want to exaggerate on a point which can be checked immediately, but he had better check the figure he mentioned, which should be \$125,000.

**Mr. Perrault:** I know that if the Leader of Her Majesty's loyal Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) makes a request and provides a justification for it, the increase may come along next year.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Perrault:** The right hon. gentleman who presided over the affairs of Canada between 1957 and 1962 may be a colourful and interesting orator, but the promise he made in 1949 to strengthen the role of the opposition in the House of Commons faded like a prairie violet at high noon when he propelled his way to power in 1957. Nothing was done to help the opposition in this house.

Opposition members have engaged in a vigorous and personal attack on the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). May I remind them that one of his first actions as Prime Minister was to extend these grants to the opposition, and not only that but also to attempt to ease the lot of the backbenchers of all parties. For this he should be thanked.

May I suggest that if the right hon. gentleman from Prince Albert had taken action during those years of Conservative government to organize more efficiently the business of the Canadian people, then our political history might have been written differently today. Today's government is willing to establish the areas where reforms are required and is willing to act, even if controversy ensues, to correct abuses and to improve procedures.

On October 27, 1949, the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) said the following:

An opposition does not properly perform its functions unless it examines all expenditures made

[Mr. Perrault.]

with a searching eye and fearless criticism, yet members of the House of Commons have no proper facilities to enable the full examination of the public accounts and estimates. Debates on estimates are futile—An expenditure of millions of dollars that are totally unjustified could conceivably be passed without much danger of detection. Canadians have become so used to the expenditure of billions that a million here or there seems of little consequence.

The budget in the fiscal year 1948-49 was \$1.9 million. The budget in the fiscal year 1956-57 was \$4.528 million, but no reform was initiated by that government to correct this abuse.

Let them attack this government, Mr. Speaker. It is a government which has the courage to say that the status quo is not good enough, that we are going to have a committee system which, when it becomes fully operative, will be a safeguard against an imprudent waste of funds something which was charged by the right hon. gentleman 20 years ago. And some of the opposition critics accuse this government of attempting to trample on democracy!

It was 20 years ago that the right hon. gentleman made the following statement:

If parliament is to be made as effective an instrument in the modern world as it should be, the procedure of parliament should be modernized and brought up to date.

That is what he said, but what did his government do about it?

Today we have a government willing to initiate procedural reforms with all of their strength and possible weaknesses, and if there are weaknesses in this package of rules 75A, 75B and 75c, at least there is a government in power with the courage to initiate the proper reforms to correct these weaknesses.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Perrault:** Members may recall the speech of the former prime minister made on March 11, 1960 at page 1973 of *Hansard* of that day. At that time he said:

We are now in our forty-second day and the order paper does not seem to be diminishing at any great rate of speed. I hope that after a number of matters are dealt with in the legislative program, the subject of defence may receive early attention in committee.

Then on July 21, 1960, almost nine years ago, he appealed for shorter speeches. He said:

Do not tell me that once an item has been dealt with repetitious utterances by other members having similar views add either to the forcefulness of the argument or the effectiveness of the examination.