

Procedure Committee Report

When we talk about changes we should think of deeper changes that would go to the root of the matter.

When committees are set up such as the committee on agriculture, the board of grain commissioners, the Farm Credit Corporation, that does not change anything. No matter how many committees are set up or how long they sit, that will change nothing.

We are no longer in 1215 when the king was deposed by the parliament of England. We are in 1965. This is a new era. The vote of non-confidence should first be done away with. It does not exist in the United States and we should have it abolished. We should have elections at set dates, that is every four or five years.

These are changes which are necessary and that we should bring about at this time, in 1965. I do not know whether the government would be prepared to do so, and I have doubts in this respect. In my opinion, the government would rather be in the present situation and exercise some control. But those on the government side would have more freedom because they could vote more readily against a piece of legislation without the government being defeated as a result.

I believe these changes ought to come into force immediately because they are badly needed. The present situation cannot be tolerated any longer. I do not know if we are going to have minority governments for many years—it is quite possible—it is up to the people to decide, but, on the other hand, if we are going to have them in the future it will be the only way to administer this country properly.

We ought to find several ways in order to change this situation, and I tell you that in spite of all the efforts made by the committee and by all those who are in favour of such a change we will not get anywhere because we are now discussing the fifteenth report, we had a fourteenth report and numerous others previous to that and we are sitting all the time, even in the summer, and we have no more holidays. Sessions have definitely not been shortened by those new changes, because we are still sitting and this is the same session which opened on February 18, 1964, and this is March 18, 1965; we are still considering the legislation presented last year.

I think such a situation is abnormal and I ask hon. members to be cautious in considering this measure. I ask members on both sides of the house to take a second look at this measure before giving their approval. I think we should not approve this report tonight, but

[Mr. Caron.]

we should rather put off the whole matter in order that it may be thoroughly thought out so that it will better suit existing circumstances.

[Text]

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, after listening to the soaring eloquence of the hon. member for Hull (Mr. Caron) I am sure that my remarks will be considered quite stodgy and dull. I am glad to have an opportunity to say a few words on this fifteenth report of the special committee on procedure and organization. After nearly 20 years in this house, and being the member of this party with the longest parliamentary experience to date, I am becoming almost a memory. I have some idea how this house functions and how the committees function, and I rise to give general support to the principles of the report as guidelines for future action on the part of parliament.

First of all, I should like to pay tribute to the members of this committee. I think the committee worked in a completely non-partisan spirit in an effort to present a report to this house which could receive serious consideration on all sides. Before proceeding I must pay a tribute to the hon. member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Olson), who is the chairman of this subcommittee. Not very often does one find a farmer chairman of a committee on procedure. It does my heart good to see this son of the soil who, with all his earthiness, has his eyes on the stars of parliamentary reform.

Let me say that I too have some ideas with respect to some aspects of this report, which I will leave to a later date, although I do agree with the spirit and principle of the report in general. However, I rise at this time to speak particularly on behalf of the veterans and their dependants in this country, owing to the suggested change in the order of standing committees. I do this at the request of veterans organizations and other persons.

I note in the report that in the summary of recommendations, recommendation No. 4 provides for a standing committee on health, welfare and veterans affairs. I rise at this time to take strong exception to the inclusion of the standing committee on veterans affairs in a standing committee on health and welfare. This is not because I do not realize the importance of health and welfare; it is because of the inclusion of the standing committee on veterans affairs with this other committee. I am sure I will receive support from the