

chided him for missing four valuable hours of debate in the committee.

I am one who has spent almost 15 years in this place but it did not take me long to learn from the Member for Winnipeg-North Centre (Mr. Knowles) or a former Member, Max Saltzman, that rule changes can only properly be made if they are made with the consent of Members of Parliament from both sides of the House. Mr. Saltzman said that one can make all the rules in the world, but if an individual or a Party feels it is being shortchanged, all those rules will not make Parliament more productive or relevant and certainly not make the individual Member of Parliament feel more important in his particular role. There must be consensus and agreement from all sides.

I stated that I am disappointed in this particular debate because our previous experience with the third report shows that we can agree. Our third report was adopted unanimously after each committee member from each Party took this report to his respective caucus saying that it had to go through as a complete package or not at all. We were able to convince our individual caucuses that we could make this work by experimenting on a temporary basis to see how it worked. I believe that precedent showed that this procedure works and can be completed in a very short period of time.

It was my hope that the reports subsequent to the third report could be dealt with in exactly the same way and, according to my understanding of the mechanics, that is precisely what we were supposed to do. It was on that basis that our chairman, who happens to be a Member of our Party, in co-operation with those of us on the Liberal side, demanded and received a full caucus hearing at which we would discuss solely the rule changes contained in the reports of that particular committee. I hope that I am not betraying the confidence of the caucus, but that meeting was to take place next Wednesday when we would go over each report to try to point out the strengths and weaknesses and arrive at a consensus. We would then put our submission to the House Leader who could meet with the House Leaders of the other Parties.

It has worked before. We presently have temporary rules in place which, I submit, are working very well. We did that on the basis of consensus. Unfortunately, I think the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton has moved out of the consensus arena and into the political arena. Frankly, I feel that I am not talking to Members of Parliament but to the public, because we now seem to be trying to make a political point. The Opposition Party says that it is prepared to adopt all of these reports without any debate. However, there are some flaws in some of these reports. For instance, the Huntington-Lachance report was made by a Member of the Conservative Party and a Member of the Liberal Party. That report which dealt with accountability was debated during several long committee hearings. We felt that the accountability concept was good but the procedure for setting up all of the committees would, in effect, work to the detriment of accountability because we would not be able to get people who were prepared to serve on committees such as the Public Accounts Committee on a

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full-time basis. We felt that that system was too cumbersome and needed improvement. However, we put that in the report because it highlighted one of the concerns of all Members of Parliament, which is accountability.

One of our reports deals with the Commission of internal economy and we discussed how that might better be handled other than by a Privy Councillor or former Privy Councillors as was suggested. There is enough of them around now on both sides of the House.

In any event, we felt that the backbenchers should have some opportunity to have a final say on such things as whether we should have committee rooms, particularly for those important committees meeting on a constant basis.

I hear some people saying "filibuster". I worked 16 months on this particular committee and I feel very strongly about this issue. I was angry today and lost my temper when criticizing the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton, but those who know me realize that that is not my usual demeanor. However, I felt let down today and yesterday as a result of these particular motions. I am afraid it will do irreparable damage to the splendid work that we did over that 16 months.

The Hon. Member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) was making the point that it was agreed that we could move, after we finished our final report, in any direction we wished. It would be acceptable to move concurrence, and this was discussed at the last meeting. The last meeting was specifically set up to give final approval to the report. I know that because I was unable to attend the last meeting and I asked for a copy of the report a day in advance. I sent it back to one of the staff on the committee indicating that I thought it was a splendid report and a great summary. That was the sole reason for that particular meeting.

Let me substantiate my position. If we had not agreed on a consensus and not moved concurrence, the Government, with its majority on the committee, would then have been in a position to prevent the proposal of several suggestions because we would vote against it with the knowledge that there might be several Members who felt very strongly that it should not take place. Therefore, the consensus was there, and no vote was required. We were essentially trying to raise issues that were of concern to backbenchers. We were not necessarily agreeing with how it was dealt with. The response to the Lachance-Huntington report is an example. I personally feel it is too cumbersome. I think something like that can be done.

● (1500)

The Hon. Member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) was here earlier. He said "Yes, hammer it through like 1969." I agree with him. I think 1969 was a mistake. As it turned out we had 112 new Members when I came here in 1968. We had come from the business community, from farms and from various sectors of the community and we were anxious to get on with the business. We were fed up with the slow pace of things taking place. I remember the first speech I ever made in the House of Commons. I said "Let's get out from behind our newspapers. Let's get down to work and let's make this