

Procedure and Organization

Mr. Speaker, that is precisely what we need now. Regardless of what Standing Orders the house has, regardless of how we improve them, if the government does not introduce better legislation, that which the Canadian public asks for and needs, all this will be of little use.

Mr. Speaker, in view of the determination of the government and of the submission of the government members in accepting the proposed Standing Order, we have the right to ask ourselves some questions.

One of the questions we ask ourselves—and I repeat that many of my colleagues of the opposition have already done so, as I have too—is this: what is the government hiding to be so bent on having the right to decide, on its own, in such a short time, what legislation it should have enacted?

Since the Prime Minister is trying so hard to prevent the opposition from commenting on the legislation he introduces, we are entitled to believe, that these laws are very unpopular indeed.

In fact, the hon. member for Medicine Hat, the present Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson), said recently that were there to be now an election, it would be awkward for him to seek re-election because the government has brought forth unpopular legislation. The government is trying, by way of a provision in the rules of the house, to prevent the opposition from giving its opinion on the bills the government wants to introduce because this legislation is unpopular and detrimental to the welfare of the Canadian people.

Mr. Speaker, it is for those reasons that we are firmly opposed to that procedure and to concurrence in that report, which I call a minority report since only one party agreed with the content of rule 75c. If we are so firmly opposed to it, it is because we are afraid of what this government is planning for the future. And, knowing the background of the Prime Minister and of his nearest colleagues, I believe, Mr. Speaker, that our fears as to Canada's future, the Canadian people's future, are justified.

In today's edition of *Le Devoir*, Mr. Claude Ryan deals with this debate in an editorial which he entitles: "A deplorable blunder on the part of the Trudeau government".

In that editorial, Mr. Claude Ryan reflects almost exactly the present state of mind of the Canadian people. He concludes his article with the following words:

As in December last, the opposition parties can rely, in their fight against rule 75c, on the support

of public opinion. The government has erred in putting forward this rule. It has only half-corrected its mistake by trying, last Friday, to divide the opposition through an insidious sub-amendment. Now that this last piece of strategy, just as the equally deplorable one that was the Macdonald motion, has failed, there is only one course open to the government and that is to beat an honorable retreat. Otherwise the opposition will be compelled to carry the fight to its bitter end.

Mr. Speaker, may the government know once and for all that we, the members of the Ralliement créditiste, have no objection whatsoever to spending the summer here if need be, but we would prefer to spend it in dealing with legislative proposals to improve conditions obtaining in Canada instead of a government motion curtailing the freedom of expression of the opposition members.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I strongly support the amendment moved by the hon. member for Peace River. I do not intend at this stage to deal any further with the report of the committee on procedure and organization, but I may take the opportunity of coming back to it when the report is more closely studied.

• (5:30 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I rise on this occasion to strongly object to the proposed rule 75c. I can do no better in opening my remarks than to quote an editorial from the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* of July 14:

How Not to Make Friends

The Liberal government is stomping through a political minefield in attempting to impose parliamentary rule changes that smack of closure.

Because the business of national government is increasing day by day, and decisions on laws require faster action than has been the practice, some method must be found to speed up procedure and schedule the legislative agenda in more orderly fashion.

But the Liberal approach, and it should be pointed out that a substantial number of Liberal MP back benchers are against it, of trying to push through a time limit on debate, and clumsily making it appear that opposition parties are being gagged in the process, is not the way to achieve agreement on rules changes.

Liberal strategists responsible for the current situation ought to be instructed to read two texts: the Commons *Hansard* for 1956, and "How to Win Friends and Influence People."

The former would certainly remind them it was careless handling of a similar rule of closure on debate that hammered the first nail into the coffin of another Liberal government, branded it (at the time of the pipeline debate) arrogant and dictatorial, and helped banish it from office within months of that episode.