

Procedure and Organization

● (4:30 p.m.)

Mr. Diefenbaker: The Liberals in Manitoba could not stomach this government here and voted N.D.P. That is why we have a change of government in Manitoba today. If Liberal members have been in their constituencies I would have liked to have been present to listen to what their constituents said to them, because the language would not have been parliamentary. I presume that is the reason those members will not place it before the House of Commons.

Mr. Mark Rose (Fraser Valley West): It is a great honour to follow the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker). I feel somewhat like a conductor of a high school orchestra being asked to perform following the New York Philharmonic. I am delighted to congratulate the right hon. member for a very excellent speech in spite of the fact that he said many of the things I wanted to say. I would like to thank him also for all his kind words about the N.D.P.

This is a speech I hoped I would never be required to make. Before I am through a number of hon. members will probably feel the same way. It should have been unnecessary to make this kind of speech, but the stubborn cabinet seem to delight in this kind of cliff-hanger. We had their Christmas present in terms of rule 16A and now we face the dubious prospect of sitting around here throughout the stifling Ottawa summer.

Mr. Crouse: Incidentally, where is the cabinet?

Mr. Rose: An hon. member is asking, where is the cabinet? I imagine the cabinet is reviewing some legislation because that is what it has been doing all year.

Mr. Crouse: They are not in the house.

Mr. Rose: I wish to tell hon. members that I for one resent being kept here to prove some point or to save the face of the government house leader. I will stay here night and day—

Mr. Nowlan: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I would like the Chair to notice that there is not one member of Her Majesty's Privy Council in the chamber at this time.

Mr. Perrault: That's no point of order.

Mr. Nowlan: I would not like the member for Burnaby-Seymour, no matter how wise he may be—

Mr. Perrault: It is not a point of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member should be allowed to state his point of order.

Mr. Nowlan: I want to draw to the attention of the Chair that there is not one member of Her Majesty's Privy Council in the chamber. To my knowledge I believe this is a tradition that has been so long in observance it has almost become a rule of this house.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I fail to see the point of order.

Mr. Rose: As I was saying before the point of order was raised, I am prepared to sit here all summer to debate this amendment, although I would much rather stay here to debate something useful. I suggest the government should introduce some legislation to lower the interest rates. They should make some proposals to deal with the cost of living. We would then gladly stay here to support the government. But they are playing around here with a gag rule, a kind of subliminal closure which is not needed. For all their talk about parliamentary reform what I believe they are trying to do is cow the opposition with a lot of bull.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Rose: I think most Canadians welcome parliamentary reform. I know our party does. We agree to time limits as long as they are reached in consultation and by agreement, and to such rules as 75A and 75B. By the way, for the most part proposed rules 75A and 75B were articulated by my house leader, the phantom of parliament, that muscular member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles).

We agree there should be a reform in parliament. I do not think there will be any argument in this house that reform is not necessary, but I wish to remind the house that reform in parliament is not everything. What is really needed here is reform in government. When parliament is reformed, it does not automatically follow that government will be reformed and made more responsive to the aspirations and needs of people. We need the kind of government which is much more forthright and open and not the kind which we have now which is furtive and secretive.

How can parliamentary reform guarantee that the government is going to desist from its preoccupation with various "style" issues