

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, we consider that this is a very serious matter. We firmly believe that our rules need to be reformed. We think that the special committee, of which I had the privilege of being a member, has done a very good job. We think by and large that this package should be accepted, but we firmly believe that with this one single requirement in it the package is no good at all. It would so completely change the character of parliament that the institution would not be the same, and so, Mr. Speaker, we have to stand against it.

As the Leader of the Opposition has said, we are not reformers against non-reformers. So, Mr. Speaker, in the name of the reform we all believe in, and in the belief that we are all reasonable people who can work things out, I hope that the Prime Minister and the government tonight will indicate that they are prepared to accept the amendment, or one like it, so that this report can be sent back to the special committee where this standing order can be improved. If we can do that I think we will come up with a package that will make the performance of this house in this session, and in the sessions that lie ahead, the better performance that we all want it to be.

● (8:20 p.m.)

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford):** Mr. Speaker, my first remarks will be to congratulate most of all those who spoke before me and had the opportunity to express their views on the motion asking that the report of the committee on procedure of the house be concurred in.

I would like to congratulate in particular the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) who certainly enlightened the committee during the discussions, as well as the government house leader (Mr. Macdonald) and the chairman of the committee with whom we had fruitful and satisfactory discussions.

There is no doubt that in this corner of the house and like the other house leaders, we are in favour of parliamentary reform and have proved it. In fact, when they came to the house in 1962, the members of the Ralliement Cr ditiste soon noticed that Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms was in English only, and they badgered to government to obtain a French translation of the procedures of the house.

Several of our predecessors said that the procedures were archaic, outmoded and

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antiquated, but when we came here, we found that they were not available in French and we were the first to ask for a French version of Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms. But after getting the French translation of Beauchesne, we had to work towards the improvement of the rules of the house. That is why I say this committee is extremely important, because what comes out of our discussions will be approved by the house and the new procedure that we will adopt, even if we hope that other amendments or changes will be made to it, will regulate the proceedings of the house.

We need not criticize the old procedure, since we are all agreed on rejuvenating it and we all admit that it is archaic and obsolete. I feel that it is imperative that we should change our parliamentary procedure this year in order to give the public a better image of the Canadian parliament. For several years—not only in the last ten years but even before that—the standing orders of the house gave the Canadian public the impression, on many occasions, that parliament had become a joke, because of the extent and slowness of discussions and the time it took to make decisions.

We must reform our parliament for another reason: because of the duties which are ours. Our responsibilities and the importance of parliament itself should keep us from reaching decisions lightly, especially taking into account the fact that the whole Canadian economy will depend on the legislation we will pass.

However, one must not think that parliamentary reform will solve at once the economic problem of Canadians. A better parliamentary procedure does not necessarily mean a better government, because a government is not judged merely by the value of the measures it adopts. We can have a better procedure and pass legislation more rapidly but, if the opposition is governed by a mediocre procedure, it can hardly do much better. This means that the government must introduce legislation that will meet the needs of the Canadian people.

Furthermore, parliamentary reform must not contradict democracy, and because we may have had archaic rules in the past, because we may have suffered from them, we must not, adopt an extremist attitude. If we modify the procedure in such a way as to allow other abuses, the house will suffer from them in the future. To my mind, parliamentary reform must, first of all, reinforce the role of members in this house, in this way that a member who is elected by the people—there are 264 of us—must be able to express