

Debating Time Allotment

Mr. Lewis: I am sure that the President of the Privy Council had good reason for making the Minister of Agriculture sit down, and I am sure that the Minister of Agriculture has learned to be sat upon before now.

Mr. Hees: Yes, knock him down, meat ball.

Mr. Lewis: In all seriousness, I am speaking in this way because of the annoyance I felt at the attitude of the two ministers in this debate. I appreciate the difficulty in which Your Honour finds himself. I draw your attention, as did the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin), to your ruling the other day as recorded at page 10780 of *Hansard* where you said:

Once the motion has been transferred for debate under government orders it becomes the government's decision and the government's responsibility to decide whether it will proceed with its motion.

The government has decided to proceed with it. Your ruling reads:

It is at that point that the anticipation rule might become operative in the sense that the minister's motion, if proceeded with, might block consideration of the committee report.

As I understood the hon. member for Peace River and others who have spoken in support of this motion, they have drawn Your Honour's attention to your statement on July 3 and have said that now the motion has been transferred to government orders, now that the government is moving its motion, the question of anticipation becomes relevant. We ask you to say that the government's motion will in fact block consideration of the committee report, and that should not be permitted. As I understood it, that was the point of order raised this evening by the hon. member for Peace River, and may I say with respect that on July 3 you did not deal with that point of order. This is a new point of order which is precisely in line with the ruling you gave on July 3.

The sadness which I feel as I am about to sit down is at the way in which the work of the committees of this house, which were drummed up to be important and which everyone hoped would be significant, is being downgraded by the actions of this government which has the duty to make sure that the committees of parliament are in fact important.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I quite agree with what the hon.

member for York South (Mr. Lewis) has just said about the behaviour of the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) who, under his own authority, puts before the house a motion which is textually the report of the standing committee on procedure and organization, although that report has not been adopted by the house.

Mr. Speaker, what is the use of the committees if the President of the Privy Council can present to the house a motion which is textually—

Mr. Georges-C. Lachance (Lafontaine): No, no.

Mr. Caouette: The motion contains a few minor differences but it boils down to almost the same thing.

Mr. Lachance: The differences are important.

Mr. Caouette: The motion moved by the President of the Privy Council strangely resembles the report of the standing committee on procedure and organization.

So, as I said earlier, what is the use of having committees if at any time the minister can ignore everything and put himself before the house a motion that does not take into account the work of the committees?

For instance, has the President of the Privy Council any consideration for hon. members who sit on the committees? Are they mere ciphers? Are they appointed to a committee for the simple pleasure of knowing they will sit there and with no intention of considering the report they will make?

The President of the Privy Council presents a motion to set the new standards of parliamentary procedure. In my opinion, he is completely wrong in doing it that way and showing no respect for the wishes of the committee that presented its report on June 20 last. It was ignored.

And today the President of the Privy Council must face up to a situation which is unacceptable. He is afraid. It is all very well to say that the committee has nothing to do with his stand or his motion but it is quite obvious however, in the eyes of all hon. members, that the President of the Privy Council has disregarded the committee, that his action is meant to prove that a committee is totally inefficient with regard to the sound management of the nation's business. I would even dare say that the President of the Privy Council should apologize and withdraw his motion as long as the third report of the