

opposition will have their choice in many respects, but it seems that the hon. member for York South is questioning the reason for this. Apparently he believes that the government will not be reasonable and the power which the opposition had will be used by the government, as he said, maliciously. According to him the government will use the power in an unreasonable way but the opposition will use sweet reason at all times. Never will they try to pile up points for the next election, never will they try to filibuster. Obviously the impression is left that the people gave a mandate to the opposition to use the power and not to us. May I remind you, Mr. Speaker, that in the last election the mandate was given to the government, not to the opposition.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Forty five per cent.

**Mr. Otto:** No, 52 per cent. In listening to the speeches from the Conservative side I was reminded of a statement made by the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) when he took me to task about three years ago and said "the young gentleman", meaning me—

**Mr. MacEwan:** It certainly was more than three years ago.

**Mr. Otto:** —is under the impression that this house is a legislative body. I want to remind him that this is not a house for legislation or for governing; it is a house solely to maintain freedom and a place to express grievances." That is what he said and that is what the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) has repeated. He said it is not a legislative grist mill. If this were a debating society without any connection with the public and without any idea of what the public will is, all of the arguments used would have been valid. However, I would like to remind the house that so far as the people are concerned it is their will that this be a house for legislation. They want legislation to be passed here. But no one has yet been able to tell us how we will be able to get 80 or 90 bills through this house without having to invoke rule 16-A.

**An hon. Member:** Try us and you will find out.

**Mr. Otto:** Unless such is the sweet will of the opposition, of course. That is what the people want. The fact is that the Prime

*Motion for Concurrence in Report*

Minister is not only changing the rules of this house but also changing the structure of the government itself.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** You were right on the first one.

**Mr. Otto:** The people thought we were a legislative body. They found we were not, and they are disenchanted with us. Here we are, a nice little debating club discussing rules of procedure and hope we will be able to get a little more popularity or use from the people on the opposite side and how to add up points and ammunition for the next election. That is not what the people want, and this is the very point at issue. Surely you, Mr. Speaker, must acknowledge that it is not only the rules of the house that are being changed but also the whole structure of the government. No one could have missed the announcement by the Prime Minister that there would be a change in the whole cabinet structure.

The hon. member for York South pointed out what the Prime Minister has already said, that indeed it is questionable whether the cabinet itself sets down policy, that in many cases it is the administration, the senior civil servants, the establishment, the mandarin class that does so. Why do hon. members think we now have a schedule for ministers? The Prime Minister himself has said we must give time to the ministers to look after their departments and to come up with policies. There is nothing strange in this. Have you not heard of regional desks?

**Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West):** But they are not part of government.

**Mr. Otto:** There is nothing sanctimonious about members of parliament, but the purpose of all these rules, and especially of rule 16A, is to make this house a functional body which will live up to the expectation of Canadians.

**Mr. Peters:** A substitute for brains.

**Mr. Otto:** I am not saying that the proposed rules will take away power from the backbenchers because the backbenchers have never had power, and it is sometimes questionable whether the cabinet has ever had power. However, we certainly like to fool ourselves and our constituents by telling them what powerful people we are. There has never been any communication between the backbenchers and their constituents and the