

Debating Time Allotment

being now. I could repeat the speech I delivered earlier but I do not think I need to. I have simply raised my present point of order because it may well be that Your Honour has further considered the matter and has further words of wisdom for our ears.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Peace River. I see the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) wishes to contribute to the point of order that has been raised. Of course, I would not presume to make a ruling without first hearing from the hon. member for Edmonton West.

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, I will not refer to the anticipation rule. It seems to me that in the ruling Your Honour gave previously you agreed with the argument that had been made, which was that the report brought in by the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Blair) was one that he was directed to bring in by the committee. He was directed by the committee to seek concurrence in that report. This is not a private member's motion on some subject or other which the government can take over as its own. The substance of this report is one that has been directed, Mr. Speaker. I must emphasize that over and over again. There must be a clear distinction between a decision of this house and a decision of the government or a wish of the government. With the greatest respect, it is the duty of the Chair to enforce the decisions of the house and not the decisions of the government. I am not going to insist on that point any more at this time because I know Your Honour agrees with it.

There was a decision, as the result of which this house directed the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization to deal with a particular motion. The committee did so. It came to a conclusion, and I am not going into the nature of the conclusion. The Committee then directed its chairman to bring in a report and to seek concurrence. I said the other day, and I repeat now, that the government, in trying to supersede the report of the committee, is actually in contempt of this house. It is the rights of the house and of all hon. members in it that must be considered, and not just the rights of the treasury benches. I therefore say, Mr. Speaker, that the decision to be rendered by Your Honour will be very, very important. The committee report could have been the report of the Committee on Transport and Communications, or it could have been the report of the

Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates. I was responsible for the insertion in the report of that latter Committee of two paragraphs which were highly critical of the government. Those paragraphs were accepted by the majority of committee members, including Liberals. The Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey) may chuckle at that, but it so happened. But, Mr. Speaker, the effect of the action that is contemplated, that is if Your Honour approves of it, is that the government can take over any committee report; it can muzzle any committee chairman—

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West):—and then bring in an excised version of that report. If we couple that action with the allocation of time, which is the substance of this order, this house will be bound hand and foot, and delivered to the mercy of the government. That, Mr. Speaker, is not parliamentary government. This house is not the servant of the government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): The first responsibility of the treasury benches is to parliament, and parliament must never be a mere rubberstamp for some ambitious ministers. Much more is implied in the point of order raised by my colleague for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin), than merely whether the government can, by dressing up a motion on the order paper and adding a couple of words, take unto itself the report of a committee. I will not repeat my arguments, Mr. Speaker, but this is the clear implication of the point of order raised by my colleague, and that is what Your Honour must decide upon.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, like the hon. members for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) and Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert), I shall restrict my remarks at this time to what I think are the two points that ought to be made at this stage of these proceedings. In the first place, I should like to confirm, by reading from the appropriate record, the statement made by the hon. member for Edmonton West that the chairman of the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization was instructed to bring this matter before the House of Commons and seek concurrence. Before I refer to the record, I wish to say that we agreed in our committee, once we realized we would get into a bit of a debate, not to rely on the minutes of our committee, since those