

Point of Order—Mr. MacEachen

record, and it is the result of a very prolific caucus research bureau. Undoubtedly each day there is a great bustle of activity in order to put together matters for presentation to the House which might be regarded as urgent and pressing.

Let us continue to use Standing Order 43. Let us give hon. members on both sides of the House a wider opportunity to use this device to bring important matters before the House of Commons.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacEachen: We are all in favour of that, but the use of lengthy preambles and motions containing arguments, false allegations, and unfounded charges, is a matter which has caused considerable trouble. In the future we intend to rise, when these abuses occur, in an attempt to enforce the rules of the House.

The rules of the House of Commons with regard to urgent and pressing necessity should be followed more carefully. If that is done it will not restrict the right of private members, but it will provide a greater number of private members with opportunities to take advantage of that critical period during the first 15 minutes of each sitting of the House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I gathered we were to discuss the rule of the House of Commons. My feeling is that the overriding problem of the hon. government House leader (Mr. MacEachen) is not so much the manner in which the rule has been administered, but the subject matter of some rather embarrassing issues which have been raised concerning the government's policy in many matters.

It is interesting the issue which gave rise to the explosion the other day by the government House leader was the motion by the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings (Mr. Hees) requesting that the government cease its present efforts to downgrade the role of the monarchy in Canada. That day I was of the impression that either the motion of the hon. minister was synthetic, on the one hand, or legitimate on the other. As my friend is never synthetic, I believe the rage of the government House leader on that occasion was genuine. What has happened is that the government has been found out concerning its feelings about the monarchy in Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): In fact the government is so sensitive about the matter that it included a note of faithfulness in the Speech from the Throne, unheard of heretofore. It had to listen to the representations in caucus of a number of hon. members, including the hon. member for York East (Mr. Collenette). As well, it had to listen to the Senators who appeared before the committee dealing with Bill C-60. They decried what they regarded as the intent of the government respecting the role of the monarchy.

[Mr. MacEachen.]

Today we are not facing a mere procedural matter. We are facing an attempt by the government House leader, in his usual skilful manner, to turn the point of the spear away from the tender spot in the armour of the Liberal party, that is, the monarchy. That is what worries me.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Another matter which worries me about the manner in which we are approaching this is the question of fairness. When the government House leader raised this issue in the House, he said that the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings had made a number of false statements, and that he was concerned about the fairness of debate in parliament. You will notice that he accused members of this party being the ones who have been unfair.

● (1532)

I was interested in the list of members to whom he referred. He referred to the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent), who is not a member of our party, and we do not want him, but he did refer to members of our party and others as being unfair. He said it was the hon. member for Saskatchewan-Biggar (Mr. Hnatyshyn) who was unfair. He said it was the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings who was unfair. Who else did he say was unfair? He said it was the hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Epp) who was unfair, and the hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie) who is unfair and is engaged in this conspiracy, to which he referred, to operate a co-ordinated political attack.

What he forgot to mention was that it was the hon. member for Ottawa-Vanier (Mr. Gauthier), and the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert), who the other day tried to imply that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) was somehow the only political leader in Canada who is prepared to negotiate sovereignty association with a province, and that was unfair. I have no doubt in the world that that conspiracy was a co-ordinated attack. The two occasions on which the hon. member for Ottawa-Vanier rose in the last few days were, I am sure, an attempt to embarrass.

The hon. government House leader has to be very careful when he talks about this matter of fairness. He asks why, in 1969, there was suddenly a flood of motions under Standing Order 43. I will tell you why there was a flood, sir; it was because the government changed the rules of this House of Commons in 1969, diminishing the right of private members, and had the temerity to push that change through by closure. That is what happened.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): What happened on that occasion was that the rights of private members were not only curtailed, they were damaged and diminished. The rights of private members on all sides of the House to ask questions were reduced. As a result, private members turned to whatever weapons they had. Certainly there are private members' motions and there are private members' bills, but there is also