

*Motion for Concurrence in Report*

house leaders will not co-operate conscientiously and effectively in making the new proceedings committee work. To a very large extent this new committee will permit the leaders of the various parties, particularly the opposition parties, to assume responsibility for the performance of their parties in the house. Heretofore the inability of the house to enforce agreements made between party leaders has resulted in a wasteful prolongation of debate which often has been deplored in every quarter of the house.

To me it seems unthinkable that any party would fail to take a serious part in the discussions of the house program, and it would appear to me that any party which failed to make a positive contribution to this discussion would suffer in the public esteem. I find it hard to believe that any party would take the peculiar stand of saying that it opposed a procedure for the establishment of a sensible program for the house business, and that it would not conscientiously and sensibly take part in these procedures.

Nevertheless we have to recognize that we live here in a political forum and, notwithstanding the desire of hon. members to accommodate themselves, there may be times when serious and unbridgeable disagreements may arise as to the programming of business in the house. Where such disagreements arise, the question which faced the committee, and which I submit this house must answer, is: who shall have the responsibility to propose a resolution to the disagreement? Much has been said, and may be said again, about the desirability of leaving an issue of this type to be worked out by the parties or, failing this, to be worked out by events. This, in the opinion of the majority of your committee, would mean in effect that any opposition party represented on the proceedings committee would have an absolute veto over the planning of the business of the house.

This veto would have both its obvious effects and its hidden effects. Obviously it would express itself in a prolongation of debate, a repetition of arguments, and a filibuster hopeful of political advantage. But it is likely to have a hidden and even more insidious effect. The undue prolongation of debate on one measure precludes the house from dealing with other measures during the session and as a consequence important sections of the public may suffer. Moreover, experience has shown that such discussions might be of an endless character giving no indication to parliament or to the public of when such a debate would end.

Accordingly your committee has recommended that the event of disagreement in the proceedings committee should not be dealt with by default, should not be dealt with by the unsatisfactory process of permitting one or more parties to impose an open and a hidden veto on the proceedings of the house. In the recommendation of your committee it is much more open, straightforward and businesslike for the house and the whole of the country to know how a stalemate of this kind is to be resolved. Consequently the proposal of your committee is that the government in such an event be confronted with its responsibility, that it be able to bring forward a timetable for the disposition of a disputed bill or bills, and that this timetable be subject to debate and to decision by the house.

Again I point out that this procedure in its essence is very similar to that used at Westminster.

**Mr. Nowlan:** The czar of the House of Commons.

**Mr. Blair:** Finally, the fourth report recommends changes in standing order 26. The recommendations of your committee follow almost exactly those of the sixth report of the committee which reported to the last parliament. The purpose of the change is to provide for a proper and more effective use of the standing order. I think all hon. members realize this is the standing order which provides for the adjournment of the house to consider a definite matter of urgent public importance.

No one will be surprised by my assertion that as matters now stand this standing order is looked upon askance by many hon. members because of what might be called the bootlegging debate that takes place on the substance of a proposal under the guise of a discussion on whether or not it is a definite matter of urgent public importance. Your committee recommends that a member seeking to make a motion for the adjournment of proceedings under this standing order should file with Mr. Speaker, at least two hours before the opening of the sitting, a statement of the matter of urgency. The member would be permitted to read his statement to the house but not to argue his case. The Speaker would make his decision—

● (4:40 p.m.)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I must bring to the attention of the house that the hon. member's time has expired. Has he leave to continue?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.