

*Debating Time Allotment*

I submit, Mr. Speaker, that the decision of the house on December 20, 1968, that gave the committee the authority to deal with this matter and bring in a report and their recommendation was in keeping with the rule, provided it was done that way. When the President of the Privy Council seeks to bring in a government notice of motion, a proposition that changes the decision that was taken on December 20, he is just as far out of line as was Mr. Pickersgill and the former minister of finance.

This is the kind of thing that happens, Mr. Speaker, when you start trying to dictate to parliament, instead of achieving these things by a process of consultation and getting along together, arriving at some kind of consensus. That is the tragedy of this debate we are now going to have. We must get along. We got along for four or five months on the basis of arriving at one consensus after another. Now, it has been decided that we are going to deal at arm's length and so the minister resorts to these various devices. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, this point of order would not be one that could be raised if we were dealing with the motion of the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Blair). He would have had the authority of the motion passed last December 20. But no, he sits in his seat, not saying a word, and apparently the other six Liberal members of that committee have concurred in this process. So, the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) brings in a motion which is in defiance of the basic rule of parliament, an old rule that has been brought up to date by yourself, sir, which says that a decision having been taken the matter cannot be raised again in the same session.

● (9:50 p.m.)

The President of the Privy Council says that there are some differences between 75c and 16A. Oh, yes, there are some differences but the basic proposition in 75c is the same as the basic proposition in 16A, namely, that if the government house leader cannot get the concurrence of the house leaders of the other parties for a time allocation order, he can bring in such an order himself.

There is a slight difference. Last December we talked about meetings of the Business Committee that would be held in the shower of the President of the Privy Council. Well, we do not have that kind of arrangement now. We do not have a formal meeting of the committee under 75c but we have the same fundamental proposition that the government

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house leader can by himself, unilaterally, dictatorially, tell this house what time allocation he is going to make. In principle, in essence 16A and 75c are exactly the same.

The President of the Privy Council also has the nerve to stand up and say that no decision was taken last December 20. Mr. Speaker, what nonsense are we supposed to take in this place? We had a long debate last December on the whole question of the rules that were brought in. As hon. members will recall, practically all of us were in support of most of the rules that were in that package. In fact if I recall correctly I was in favour of all of them but 16A, as were most hon. members.

As I say, we had a long debate and the debate zeroed in on 16A. As a result of that debate the house, by means of compromise, by withdrawal of one motion and amendment of another, reached a decision and, Mr. Speaker, I submit that this is just as much a decision as if the house were to vote tonight on the straight motion the government is trying to move.

What was that decision? The decision was that 16A, in the form in which it was before us, was not acceptable to the House of Commons. Mr. Speaker, that proposition that 16A was not acceptable was agreed to on December 20, 1968, unanimously. It was a decision concurred in by every member of the House of Commons. Granted, so far as the government was concerned, there was a condition. The condition was that the matter was being referred back to the committee, or to a new standing committee that was being set up. That is quite true, but nevertheless even though there was that condition in the mind of the government the fact of the matter is that the decision was made and 16A was out. We have been operating ever since under the new package of rules that did not include 16A. It was every bit as much a decision of the House of Commons that 16A was rejected as it was a decision that we accepted all the other rules in the package.

I come back to the condition upon which the government accepted the decision of last December. That condition was that the matter be referred to a committee. At that time we were dealing with the report of a special committee on the procedure of the House of Commons, but under the new rules we provided that there would be a Standing Committee of the House of Commons on Procedure and Organization. It was set up under the new rules and later the same day, December 20, a special motion was passed referring this matter to that standing committee.