

*Summer Recess*

Leader of the Opposition when he advocated our staying on, here in Ottawa, to put pressure on the Post Office and send the postal workers back to work.

● (1910)

Why is it that a week after, just when a mediator has been appointed and negotiations have resumed only today, they oppose the adjournment motion? Why? For political gains? To show Canadians that they have their interests at heart? How commendable! But we know full well such is not the case. We know very well that the only reason we are here is that it gives the opposition the opportunity to show that we can do more than what a mediator can accomplish or what the opposing parties could do. But that is not so. As the government has said, nothing more can be done for the time being. There will be no special legislation. We will have to go along with the mediation process until we find a common ground for negotiations. That is provided for in the statutes. The opposition is always clamouring for freedom, freedom of speech and the right to be heard.

We do indeed enjoy freedom and the right to speak, but where does a right begin and where does it end? Because there has been abuse, at some point we have to be more reasonable and show some self-discipline. Members have the right to eat any time they want, twenty-four hours a day if they wish. But we know very well that using that kind of freedom would make one sick. In fact, what all members on both sides of the House should understand is that once they have voiced their opposition to some government proposal or regulation, their right has been respected. Opposition members have indeed been able to voice their opposition to a government measure and they have had press coverage.

But that is not the kind of freedom they want. They want to abuse freedom to hinder the due process of democracy. What can the opposition gain by keeping government here all summer? They will say that we must stay here because otherwise interest rates might go up, the postal service will not be restored, the uranium cartel will only get worse, while knowing full well that the report is in the government's hands. What more can they achieve? That would be akin to a doctor refusing to leave the hospital at any time, day or night, for fear that new patients might come in. At some point one has to draw the line. You have shown your opposition. The people understand. The press has reported your arguments accurately. It is not for us to judge the validity of those arguments, yet at some point one has to call it quits. I know that the hon. member for Vegreville represents a large riding whose problems are very complex, as he has told me many times. It is the same thing for me. I wish I could have attended to the construction of a road where one has yet to be built. I also wish I had had the opportunity to discuss matters with the candidate to the leadership of the Conservative Party, the president of the Iron Ore Company, my friend, Brian Mulroney. I would have tried to find a solution to the problem of

those 150 fellows in Schefferville who have been laid off, but it still has to be solved.

That is why I have been unable to do everything I should have as vice-chairman of the Standing Committee on Transport since the month of January, at which time I met Mr. Mulroney in an attempt to find a solution for the workers who have been laid off; Mr. Mulroney himself wants the members opposite to be reminded of that. The president of the Iron Ore Company congratulated the Minister for Small Businesses, the hon. member for Charlevoix (Mr. Lapointe) and myself on the measures taken to help the people in Sept-Îles and Schefferville; this is the government that came forward with this special budget proposal for industrial restructuring and community adjustment. But one problem remains, that of Schefferville. Under normal circumstances, I should have been there to help the parties involved find ways and means of implementing the plan to greater advantage. But for 15 days now, I have had to postpone all that because, day after day, a debate has been extended which in itself is useless. Anyone can ask the president of the Iron Ore Company whether or not the plan set up by the government party during the winter has been of help to him and his company. Such a plan is mostly responsible for the collective bargaining without a strike. However, hon. members opposite will not mention that. I think that as a member from an area which has known 2,000 lay-offs last winter, we have more important things to do than to discuss an entirely fictitious extension of this session. Some people, as the hon. member for Rimouski-Témiscouata (Mrs. Côté) put it very well earlier, have done their best for us throughout the fall and spring and they should normally be entitled to holidays. Families are involved in this. The opposition is showing how irresponsible it is. If it cannot be more responsible in the House of Commons, how could it be given responsibility for the public administration as the government? This is important.

The hon. member for Rimouski-Témiscouata also raised the issue of families. When hon. members get together what do we often hear? That the life of a parliamentarian is not easy, that it is difficult and complex. We are far from our families. We would like to be closer to our children and look after their education. However, we are the first ones to burden ourselves and to become martyrs in a cause of our own making. We would be much more responsible if we were in our constituencies, with our families, working normally, finding out what is going on there rather than trying to solve the issue of interest rates within the next six weeks or trying to solve the postal conflict when the ability of the mediator has been acknowledged by both sides.

Let us deal with the uranium issue now: the new problem this week. Hon. members opposite know quite well that the report delivered to the Attorney General of Canada comes from the officials of the departments involved. Unless we want to question the professionalism of those people, all that