

Procedure and Organization

members, to be able to meet the people. That is necessary to keep in touch with the people I represent in parliament, so as to always reflect their way of thinking and inform the government of the real problems existing in my area.

I endorse the views expressed by the leader of the N.D.P. (Mr. Douglas) as to the motion before us; he gave us a very good picture of the situation. It would be in the interest of the government to give greater consideration to the serious arguments in favour of the reference of the report to the committee, with instructions to remove section 75c, which is bound to lead us to dictatorship. Even if we do not like the word "dictatorship", we have to mention it and it could be that through our mentioning it, we shall call the attention of responsible people and of the public, in order to take a step backward if need be, precisely to avoid bringing about, without realizing it, a system that was not appreciated elsewhere and that should not be more appreciated in this country.

I shall conclude my remarks by quoting the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald), who concluded his speech on July 8 with those very words:

I should like to make clear to the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin)—

Who was at that time the spokesman for the Ralliement Cr ditiste—

—that I do not think his party should be criticized for having felt on a matter of principle that they had to take a long time in debating the omnibus Criminal Code bill.

I want to thank the President of the Privy Council for having on July 8, paid such compliment to the members of the Ralliement cr ditiste for he actually acknowledged that this debate had been useful and had been conducted in a fair spirit. I go on quoting his words:

—What the house has to do is to make a provision that while hon. members may feel they have to take that time they can at least be relieved of that obligation by some kind of fair allocation of time order which will enable other matters to be dealt with.

I really do not expect hon. members to support this. On the other hand, I am sure they do not expect me to favour the system whereby a minority in this house controls the business of the house.

Now, these words I find rather objectionable, for there can be no question here of small or big groups. The people concerned are always members, representing the people, here in the house. Groups may well exist outside the house, but when it comes to

[Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse).]

debating on the business of the house, members should always be considered as individuals and not as belonging to a group.

He went on saying:

However, I trust we will have a meaningful debate in this regard, and I hope that perhaps even at this late date we may reach a genuine agreement in the house as to some effective means of programming the business—

I have been expecting this eleventh hour for the past week, and even today, and even until the last minute, I believed in the efficiency of the eleventh hour, which would have made it possible to find an alternative other than that which has been announced to us and which will take place at 1 a.m. on Thursday.

The President of the Privy Council said further, and I quote:

—bearing in mind that section 49 of the BNA Act says that ultimately the decisions of the house have to be made by a majority of voices.

At the time, he explained to us what could be the result of the eleventh hour. Today, we can better understand the meaning of the warning he was giving us when referring to section 49 of the BNA Act.

I wish, as he does, that even at this late hour, we can come to a democratic agreement as a result of a useful debate and I hope that the government will not use its majority to impose a rule which would not do honour to parliament.

If our society has to be put in a straight-jacket as it develops, I do not believe that it could be described as progress. If, in order to expedite business, the members should be deprived of freedom of expression, I wonder where we are going.

It is most unfortunate that following the adoption of the official languages bill, the government should now impose upon this same parliament the extreme restriction on the use of language, which is the vehicle of the official languages.

[English]

Mr. R. N. Thompson (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, two days ago, on July 20, man reached the moon and the spirit of mankind spontaneously soared to new heights of hope and brotherhood. Today, on July 22, the Prime Minister, aided by the government house leader, moved to throttle free speech by invoking closure. The spirits of men accustomed to free speech in a parliamentary democracy, and after all parliament is the