

Procedure and Organization

occasion. I thought times had changed somewhat. I thought: Surely, some Liberals have learned some things over the years; surely some of the Liberals are a new breed of cat who have a more up to date outlook.

An hon. Member: They have the same meow.

Mr. Burton: I was rather hopeful about the situation. But these thoughts turned out to be illusions. The Liberal approach to the rules has turned out to be a case of typical Liberal arrogance, autocracy and dictatorial conduct.

An hon. Member: What about your attitude?

Mr. Burton: We are talking about the rules of the house which you are attempting to foist upon parliament and the entire country. Rule 16A before Christmas, and 75c, are being imposed from the top without regard to the fact that the effect will be of crushing any opposition in the path of the Liberal cabinet juggernaut. Hon. members will note that I said "Liberal cabinet juggernaut", because hon. members across the way know, as well as anybody else, that this is the area from which the real pressure is coming. These two rules, 16A and 75c, imposed upon the committee by the heavy hand of the government, have placed many of the government's own supporters in a very difficult position. When I expressed my feeling last fall that there was hope for good rule changes, it was based in part on the knowledge that on the government back benches there are many capable men who are intelligent, well educated and well motivated.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Burton: All hon. members with those characteristics are now being put to a cruel test and a cruel choice. Either they stand up for their convictions and principles by opposing 75c, or they give in to the heavy hand that is bringing pressure to bear upon them and which they know will eventually bring their government to defeat. I look across the way and see many hon. members with the characteristics I have mentioned; the hon. member for Scarborough East (Mr. O'Connell), the hon. member for Sarnia (Mr. Cullen), the hon. member for Kamloops-Cariboo (Mr. Marchand), the hon. member for Prince George-Peace River (Mr. Borrie) and others. I know these are sincere, hardworking members. But I suggest that each of them, and in fact all members of the House of Commons, reach

a point when they have to make a decision whether they are going to fight for some of the principles basic to the good operation of democratic institutions, or whether they are going to give in to the heavy hand that is pressing on them at the present time.

I suggest that if they are content to become puppets in the hands of their leaders, and remain as such, they must make that choice now. This is the turning point for many hon. members opposite. They will have to make a very difficult and important choice. There are other sincere, hardworking members on the other side of the chamber. There is the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Blair), who introduced the motion now under debate. He is certainly a sincere, hardworking member. I am sure he is trying to do a good job, but he is operating under a very special difficulty.

● (9:10 p.m.)

I recall when the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton attended the same university as I did a number of years ago. At that time a bright future was already being forecast for the hon. member, that some day he might be a federal cabinet member of the prime minister of the country. One gains the impression that in fact he really would not mind too much if he were brought into the cabinet of the present government. I do not criticize the hon. member for this ambition, but I suggest that he, too, is now in a position where he has to make a very difficult choice. He must decide whether he will bow to the pressures brought to bear upon him by those in inner government circles, or whether he will stand up for his convictions. The hon. member looked very uncomfortable on several occasions when this debate commenced and we were discussing the various points of procedure and order that were raised. I suggest that if any hon. member has in fact such ambitions, in the long run he will be much better off to stand up for his principles and convictions at the present time. History can and does repeat itself. Former Liberal governments have grown arrogant and autocratic with age. This government has developed such characteristics more quickly than Liberal governments in the past. Such attitudes can lead to the downfall of a government, regardless of its political stripe. Some hon. members, particularly on the government side, are prone to think that the public does not care much about such things as rules and rule changes. But, Mr. Speaker, history has shown the public to be far more sensitive to