

why the cash deposits now available to the Government are so far beyond those which were available last year, more than double. They will not answer. They will make no disclosures and give no explanations. In the absence of explanations and in the absence of answers, and in the presence of the fact that it has that \$8.1 billion there, what are we to do to act responsibly? We must oppose by any means available to us on the basis of the information which we have or have not received despite repeated attempts to get it. The only manner in which we can oppose, Sir, is to prevent the introduction of that Bill.

I am convinced, Sir, that it is false to say that not giving government this supplementary borrowing Bill of \$4 billion will hold up the payment of income tax refunds. That is a political statement and it is a sad one, to my way of thinking. In any event, it is false.

One last thing, Sir. It will take the Government, by the application of Standing Order 8(3), five days to get its \$29.5 billion. It would have taken three days—not much of a short-cut—if we had permitted it to go the supplementary borrowing route. It was not necessary and it would have had a hangover in that \$4 billion for which we were being asked to provide authority. That is what we are objecting to. If the Government House Leader was really serious about parliamentary reform which would permit governments to govern and permit oppositions to discharge their responsibilities, he would bring forward for quick passage all of the outstanding reports of the parliamentary committee on reform. These reports were dropped from the Order Paper at the prorogation of the last session, but are still there, as the Government House Leader told me before. They are in the public domain, but they are sitting on the shelf, no longer on our Order Paper. If the Government was really serious, it would bring all of them forward and let us pass them before the end of June. Let us give them quick debate and bring about meaningful reform in this place.

I, for my part, and on behalf of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, with whatever tools have been left to it, will be very pleased to sit down and have a very serious discussion with the House Leader and with you, Sir, and with the House Leader of the New Democratic Party, to see if we can design some method of bringing those reports before the House, agreeing on a time limit for their debate—a short time limit—and for their very quick and expedient passage.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of our House Leader today, I would just like to make a few comments concerning your reflections, the remarks of the Government House Leader and those of the House Leader of the Official Opposition.

First of all, I would like to join with others in commending you for deciding to deal with this very difficult issue within the limitations, as you yourself pointed out, of what the Speaker is able to do about this issue in the absence of any clear instruction from the House, and in the absence, I might say, of any clear political will to do something about it. I believe you are to be commended for taking your responsibilities as Speaker seriously in trying to do what you can within the very real

limitations which you yourself pointed out. I will have more to say about those limitations in a moment, Mr. Speaker.

I hope that co-operation between the House Leaders will be possible in the near future and that some kind of agreement could be reached with respect to a Standing Order which would give the Chair more instruction, more clear guidance, with respect to the taking of votes, but perhaps leave some discretion with the Chair for special circumstances or whatever. But that is just a personal view of mine. I do hope that there could be that kind of co-operation.

However, my concern is that the remarks of the Government House Leader were not, in my view, designed to create that kind of co-operative atmosphere. He did not go anywhere toward creating that possibility. If anything, he damaged that likelihood by bringing in things which have nothing to do with what is going on here in the House of Commons, in the federal Parliament. The Government House Leader would have been well advised not to have commented on the things he did comment on and to have stuck to what our responsibilities are here in the House of Commons in ensuring that we conduct our business in a way which commands the respect of the Canadian people.

I feel we do have to do something about the bell ringing episodes. I am sympathetic with the comment of the Hon. Member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) that very few tools are left to oppositions to indicate to government: "Hey, we are really serious about this". I do not always agree with the Official Opposition as to what it decides to get its back up about and go to the wall for. In fact, I very seldom agree with it. However, I do agree that very few tools are left to oppositions which, for one reason or another, make that decision. Fewer tools, I might say, are left to an opposition Party which is not the Official Opposition. So there is a problem.

I ask my Progressive Conservative colleagues to consider, especially since they regard themselves as defenders of the parliamentary traditions despite the damage which has been done to that tradition by the Liberals over the years, whether, in spite of the legitimacy of the argument that this is one of the few tools left to the Official Opposition, we are not, by having these bell ringing episodes, doing damage to the very institution which I believe the Progressive Conservative Party genuinely cherishes. The public really does not understand, and I believe no one can really understand, just what is going on with the empty Chamber and the ringing of the bells. It is always an embarrassment to me, Mr. Speaker.

For instance, yesterday afternoon there must have been people here who had only one day in Ottawa. They come here to watch the debates of the House of Commons and all of a sudden the Speaker says "Call in the Members", a bell starts to ring, and everyone takes off. Surely people who watch us all the time on TV must be getting used to it by now so they know what is going on. But people who come here out of the blue to see their Parliament in action must really wonder what the devil is going on when the bells start to ring. I do not know if they are told, or if they could be told: "Don't bother sitting around because there is not going to be a vote today". "Well, I