

Procedure and Organization

parliamentary considerations. But at the same time the full weight of responsibility is thrown upon the Ministry—

—Premier Mussolini... said "We ask for full powers because we wish to assume full responsibility for all our actions."

The entire afternoon in the Chamber of Deputies was spent in the discussion of the bill granting to the Government full powers for bureaucratic and fiscal reforms. At nine o'clock tonight Deputies on all sides of the Chamber, pleading that they were hungry and tired, asked that the sitting be adjourned to Sunday but Premier Mussolini rose and said: "I prefer that the discussion be concluded tonight."

The Speaker asked for a vote on the subject whereupon all the Deputies... that desired adjournment approved of Mussolini's suggestion amid considerable hilarity.

Socialist Deputy Modigliani complained about the haste in closing discussion.

"The Chamber should be at least allowed to make its testament before being killed", he declared.

Deputy Chiesa said he would have preferred a full detailed program of what the Government intends to do if the Chamber granted full powers.

"Vote against the Government and be done with it", cried the Premier. "We don't need you."

My closing remark is not that we have come to the situation which existed in the days of Mussolini, because I do not believe this will happen in respect of 75c. I say, however, the end has come to the bright start of the 28th parliament. There is no doubt about this. This parliament will not die. There will be other members here in time. The unfortunate thing is that, although parliament is not dead, this marks the end of the beginning of the brightest prospects we have had, with some of the brightest members who have been elected to parliament. We now have the beginning of a parliamentary confrontation and conflict that will not do justice to and will not enhance this parliament. Mr. Churchill, many years ago, said that democracy is the most inefficient form of government designed by man but it works. That is the way this parliament has worked. In the name of God, Mr. Speaker, if men can land on the moon why can men not work together, debate together, consult together, co-operate together and compromise together in this institution? This is the only way parliament can function constructively in this day of change, as it always has functioned in the past.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. MacInnis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wish to draw Your Honour's attention to the fact that the government house leader is probably now sitting in the

[Mr. Nowlan.]

position in which he is in order to control the work of the Clerk's office.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Kaplan).

• (9:40 p.m.)

Mr. Robert P. Kaplan (Don Valley): Mr. Speaker, as all sides of this house—

An hon. Member: Take your foot off the chair and stand up like a man.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

An hon. Member: And put your purse down on the floor.

Mr. Kaplan: Mr. Speaker, I do not claim the respect that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) receives, and I do not claim even the respect that the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) received, but I would appreciate the opportunity to be heard.

As all sides of the house acknowledge, yesterday and the day before have been sorry days in this house. This has been a shocking and frightening debate carried out at a low level. On Tuesday, Mr. Speaker was on his feet more often than the speakers from the floor.

There have been several low points in the debate. Perhaps the lowest was the speech by the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard), who is unfortunately not in the house now. I hope there is no other speech in the records of this house that is as low.

Another low point came from a surprising source. It came from the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). He laid before Mr. Speaker yesterday a series of considerations and arguments that the rules would permit, and indeed authorized, a procedure whereby without any intervening business the Chair might be obliged to entertain a series of motions for adjournment at fixed times—at perhaps 10 minute intervals. This novel proposal, which Your Honour indicated had never been argued before to your knowledge, would allow any five members of the house who could command a standing vote to prevent parliament from ever considering legislation again.

Your ruling, Mr. Speaker, was a great relief, because I read the rule in question and I could see the possibilities. This submission was not worthy of a man who loves this institution, as the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre does, and who has given his life to it. It was not worthy of that hon. member.