

Mr. Deans: No, when he is here. I may be one of the few people in this place who is not afraid of him.

I hope the committees work well. I am sure they will. I think that the added numbers of opposition Members and the larger numbers on the committee will make sense. The committee that decided on the numbers of 10 and 15 took into account that there would be changes to the composition of the House of Commons. It took into account the fact that as the numbers were struck, they should reflect the balance of the seats in the House. It was difficult to come up with a reasonable balance which would afford both the Government adequate representation and the Opposition an adequate opportunity to participate.

The Government House Leader, in suggesting that we go to 15 members from 10 for all of the normal standing committees, showed a flexibility and understanding which I would have expected from him. I therefore believe that the committees will work well. I believe that having four combined opposition members will permit the Opposition to operate effectively in terms of its analysis of the Government's legislative programs and, equally important, its analysis of the Government's expenditure programs. That is in fact the role the Opposition must play.

I am quite happy with the report. If it is a forerunner of the kind of co-operation we can expect in the future, then I think it will serve the House of Commons and the Parliament of Canada well. If, with that kind of co-operation in mind, the Government should decide to make known to the Opposition the analyses of the Treasury Department regarding the numbers of jobs that will be lost, then I think that that would be going even a little further with that kind of co-operation than it has presently gone and it would be welcome.

Mr. McGrath (St. James East): Mr. Speaker, in the few minutes we have left, I would like to ask a question of the Government House Leader (Mr. Hnatyshyn). One of the weaknesses of the system now which has been addressed by a recommendation of the last Committee on Standing Orders and Procedure is that standing committees are not self-starting. We saw evidence of that in the last session of the last Parliament. I had direct experience with one standing committee, the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration. Notwithstanding the important issues of the day, that committee did not get under way until about three months after the commencement of the last session, much to the frustration of Members of the House who wished to address the important issues of the day to be dealt with by that committee.

In view of the fact that this problem is not addressed in the current Provisional Standing Orders, I would ask the Government House Leader whether it is the intention of the Government, which now has the required responsibility and initiative, to proceed with the organization of these committees soon so that they can get their important work under way?

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Mr. Speaker, I thank my distinguished colleague, the Hon. Member for St. John's East (Mr.

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McGrath), for asking that important question. I believe it reflects our desire to ensure the full participation of Members. I can only say to him that it is our intention to move immediately with the organization of committees, particularly in light of the fact that this Parliament commenced on November 5 and, under the Provisional Standing Orders, we are obliged to report Supplementary Estimates by December 10. I was happy to see a consensus with respect to the composition of the committees at an early date. This will therefore allow us to organize those committees and give the maximum time available to private Members of the House of Commons to examine those Supplementary Estimates before the date of supply which, in this trimester, is December 10.

Motion agreed to.

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SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed, from Thursday, November 15, consideration of the motion of Mr. Ken James for an Address to Her Excellency the Governor General in reply to her Speech at the opening of the session; and the amendment thereto of Mr. Allmand (p. 252).

Mr. Speaker: It being one o'clock, the House shall stand adjourned until two o'clock.

At 1 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

Mr. Roland de Corneille (Eglinton-Lawrence): Mr. Speaker, during the election campaign the Conservatives promised a better future but gave very few specifics. They appealed to the people that change was needed to bring in fresh ideas. Change was the key word. Canadians awaited the Throne Speech with great curiosity and anticipation. What are the changes? What are the fresh ideas?

Some people heard the Throne Speech, others relied on the media to find out about it. Was it startling? Was it exciting? Was it interesting? Was it full of changes and filled with new ideas? Indeed, were there any new ideas? Can anyone remember what was said? I would say that the Throne Speech was one of the most forgettable speeches that I can possibly remember except that that would not be correct because one cannot remember a forgettable speech. I must say that the Throne Speech is the most forgettable on record. In fact, the only hope it has of being remembered is that it has been hailed as such an outstanding failure.

I refer to the writings of Barbara Amiel in *The Toronto Sun* of November 6. She wrote this about the Throne Speech:

Throne Speeches are by their nature vague. This was breathtaking in its vacuity. When it was specific, it was silly. Brian Mulroney couldn't have crammed one more pretentious cliché into his Throne Speech if he tried.