

Supply

The problem with this House is that there are some great issues which have to be discussed concerning Canada. How do we relate to the United States and the rest of the world? How do we relate to the Soviet Union? What is our attitude toward trading and the matter of disarmament? How should we look after our veterans? All of these things we address in terms of legislation. All of these things we address in the Question Period. Some of them we address when we take legislation to committees. But there is very little opportunity for the give and take of debate on the floor of this House of Commons which Members have managed to do in the Parliament of Great Britain. These allotted days for the Opposition, when the Opposition has the right to choose a topic, are one of those opportunities. If there is a clash of opinion or a clash of ideas, differences of points of view expressed forcefully but with civility, then I think that is a healthy turn of events. Today has been that kind of a day. When there are pleas for lack of partisanship, let us make sure that if we plead for lack of a certain kind of partisanship, a lack of meaningless partisanship, and can have instead the opportunity to engage in a clash of ideas, that we do so.

Someone said, I think it was the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Evans) whose speech I enjoyed and I compliment him on it, that we have to come to consensus. If we can, we must come to consensus on objectives. We may not always agree. Some Parties in this House have a responsibility to lead. And we, as well as opposing from time to time, have a responsibility to suggest. But I think it was the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre who said that we should come together. I accept that we should come together to discuss things far beyond just a debate like today. I think it would be important in this House if someone had thought that there might be ability, buttressed by appropriate staff in this Chamber, alone or in concert with the other place, to have done a great deal of the work that has been given to the Macdonald Royal Commission.

I mean no disrespect to a former Member of this House, but it seems to me that ultimately Hon. Members of this House,

by their votes, the Government by the policy it presents, and the positions taken by others, are going to be judged. If it is the Government which decides that there should be a special committee on the economic opportunities in the short, medium or long-term for Canada, and what can be done about that, then that is a matter in which we should be able to participate. On that committee there would be that kind of clash of opinion. If we could come to grips with deciding for the country what is a true relationship between government and the private sector, government and business; what is the place of government in Canada, whether it is appropriate that we adopt from other jurisdictions certain things which may be fine for them but many not apply here, those too are matters that we should be prepared to discuss.

I think the structures are here. The people are here. I agree with the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre that we are not tapping the potential of this House of Commons at all. Perhaps that is why there is such frustration among Members which finds itself displayed in other ways.

I have had only a short time, but I answer the challenge of the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre in this way. Allow us to participate. My Party has advanced ideas over the years which may not all be agreeable, but we have found that Governments do not listen. We do not advance ideas for self-aggrandizement; we advance them because we are as interested in the progress of this country as anyone else.

Give us all a chance to participate, and perhaps all Hon. Members would be surprised at the consensus we could find.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Order, please. It being 5 p.m., it is my duty to inform the House that in accordance with Standing Order 62, the proceedings on the motion have expired. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until Monday at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 2.

At 5 p.m. the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.