

I am answering the question. We are masters of the House in the sense that we have to conduct the affairs of government. That is what it means to assume the power.

Mr. Hees: How things have changed today.

Mr. Nielsen: They are the same old bunch, Sir, and they have the same views. They are taking the position that they are not going to be unstuck, they are not going to step down until they decide to do so.

Mr. Trudeau: Just get support for your motion.

Mr. Nielsen: This is why the New Democratic Party is going along with them. The Prime Minister says, with the supreme confidence borne of that intimacy which can exist only between bedfellows, that we should get support for our motion of nonconfidence. He knows we are not going to get it because of those to my left.

Mr. Hees: He has already seduced the NDP.

Mr. Baldwin: Seduction with no promise of marriage.

Mr. Nielsen: He says that the matter must be one going to the roots of their policy. What policy? They went across this country for two months spouting policy that has been rejected by the people of Canada, and now they have shifted into an entirely different field.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

• (2150)

Mr. Nielsen: Talk about U-turn governments! This is the most flip-flop government I have ever seen in this House, or read about.

Before my time expires, I want to return to the innuendoes and inferences left by the Prime Minister, which are beneath the dignity of any prime minister of this country, to the effect that certain unspecified, unnamed members of this House were guilty of some kind of racism in the campaign. What bothers me is not that unsupported charge, not the innuendoes that he left, so much as something else he said. Again, I copied down his remarks. He said that if hon. members want to know, "I will tell them what evidence I have." This bothers me—

Mr. Jamieson: Like wiretapping.

Mr. Nielsen: —because there is a new security force and because there is a propensity on the part of the government to compile dossiers on everybody.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member's time has expired.

Mr. Jamieson: Continue.

Mr. Speaker: Only if the hon. member has the unanimous consent of the House may he continue his remarks.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: There is not unanimous consent. The hon. member for Cochrane (Mr. Stewart).

The Address—Mr. R. Stewart

[Translation]

Mr. Ralph Stewart (Cochrane): Mr. Speaker, I could start my speech now and conclude it tomorrow morning if I am permitted to do so, or still agree that it is ten o'clock as it does not make any difference to me.

Some hon. Members: Go on.

Mr. Stewart (Cochrane): Mr. Speaker, before the end of the last parliament we were told that you would not be with us at the next session and we are all quite happy, myself included, to see that you have been re-elected and I congratulate you as well as the three hon. members respectively elected to the positions of Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Assistant Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole House (Messrs. McCleave, Laniel and Boulanger).

I want to congratulate the two hon. members, the mover (Mr. Blais) and the seconder (Mr. Blaker) of the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne who have spoken on the first day of the session. I wish to mention in particular the mover, not only because he is a remarkable man but also because he comes from Northern Ontario. I am pleased to see that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has decided to choose someone from that place, thus proving that we have many gifted people in the North.

[English]

We have had an election and the people of Canada sent 264 of us to this House to look after the affairs of the country. They did their duty on election day; now it is our duty to give service for as long as possible in order to carry out what the people have already asked us to do. Can we sit here and say that there should be collusion between one part of the country and another in trying to arrange for the right number of seats in this House so that the people will not need to go back to the polls and make the same kind of decision before four more years have passed?

I suggest, Sir, that there is obviously some kind of deficiency in our system and that the time has come for changes to be made in our basic system. Unfortunately, whenever we mention any change that involves the constitution, we hear the same kind of answer, particularly if it has to do with fixed dates for elections: some people say, "We do not want to be like the United States." That reminds me a little of some people around Ottawa. When you suggest that Ottawa and the surrounding area should be a national capital region, some people say, "Oh, but we do not want to be like Washington."

There is no reason in the world why we have to be like anybody else. There are ways of changing things by using methods that would be to our advantage, without our needing to change our whole system and without our needing to be like anybody else. There is no more reason for Ottawa to be like Washington than there is for us to be Americans. This applies equally in the case of a fixed day for elections.

I do not always agree with the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters), but this is one point on which I agree with him wholeheartedly. I remember that in the previous parliament he submitted a private member's bill relating to specific and fixed days for elections. Certainly, when