

Mr. Smith: Madam Speaker, since the passing of the Hon. Member, the Government has answered questions on the Order Paper standing in his name. We will continue to do that. We fully respect the fact that those questions were asked during the course of this session, and throughout the balance of this session, as answers are provided by the various Ministers, they will be tabled in the House.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S.O. 62—PARLIAMENT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Nielsen:

That this House condemns the Government for its deliberate and persistent undermining of the parliamentary process, for its flouting of parliamentary traditions and for its continuing attempts to reduce Parliament and parliamentary government to an irrelevant appendix in the formulation and application of major national policy decisions and the expenditure of public funds, and demands that the Government immediately reverse its attitude of regarding Parliament as the private preserve of the Liberal Party thus hastening the restoration of respect for and the dignity of this institution.

Mr. Roger Simmons (Burin-St. George's): Mr. Speaker, it was the Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Nielsen) who earlier today set down this motion. I, as others in the House, listened with great interest to his speech this morning, in the fond hope that somehow we would hear from him why he had chosen so scandalously to waste the time of the House with this absolutely silly and frivolous motion.

● (1520)

He did not do that, but he did achieve a record of sorts. He managed to deliver the worst speech ever delivered by any Opposition Leader in this House or in any legislature anywhere. What a hypocritical pack of nonsense we heard from the Hon. Member for Yukon this morning. I say to him: "Get yourself a new ghost writer; the present one has failed you miserably". What a terrible excuse for a speech we heard this morning. Surely he, with all of his years in this House, could have done a lot better than that.

On a more compassionate note, it is surely a sad spectacle to sit here and watch the Leader of the Opposition in his present frame of mind. John Donne, I think it was, said that no man is an island. It is true that the Hon. Member for Yukon and I sit in different caucuses, support different Parties and for the most part hold widely divergent views on many issues, but it is nevertheless painful to sit here and watch his virtual demise. Despite our adversary relationship, I find no particular joy in his ever lessening grip on reality. It is not a pleasant matter to watch a fellow human being struggling to adjust to what must be a diminished use of his God-given faculties.

Mr. McKinnon: You ought to pass out bags for this, the airlines do.

Supply

Mr. Simmons: In that context, it is difficult to muster the bile, the hate, the scorn, to match what the Leader of the Opposition metes out every time he opens his mouth, as he did this morning with such consistency. Indeed, I feel no particular desire to try and match his bile or hate. We on this side do not reciprocate with hate. We are too preoccupied with pity for that gentleman, pity for his one-track mind, pity for his lifelong obsession with revenge, pity for one of God's own creatures, a man who in earlier times had made such a significant contribution to this country, a man who in more recent times has allowed his talent to become the servant of his temper, a man who has allowed his benevolence as a human being to play second fiddle to his bile.

I feel no particular desire to attack the Leader of the Opposition. I do want to attack some of his ideas, and I shall. In the debate this morning, the outgoing Leader of the Opposition, the temporary Leader of the Opposition, the soon-to-be decapitated Leader of the Opposition, talked about running everything from the Prime Minister's office. I say to him and his Party that they should know.

I suggest that they get out the estimates, that they look at the actual expenditures for 1979, 1980, 1981 and 1982. They will find, as I found and pointed out in the Miscellaneous Estimates a few weeks ago, in the presence of some Opposition Members, that it was during the period of the short-lived Clark Government that the numbers in the Prime Minister's office escalated and the expenditures for the Prime Minister's office escalated. It was after that period when the present administration took over in February or March, 1980 that the numbers came down in both respects. The number of people employed in the PMO came down and the expenditure on that Department of Government came down. The Leader of the Opposition will well know what he is talking about when he says there has been an effort to run things from the PMO because he was part of that effort during the days of the short-lived Tory administration.

He also talked rather fervently about Parliament being shunted to the sidelines. I say to him, not quite. I recognize, as he does, that there has been quite an effort to shunt it to the sidelines. I recognize that it is he and his co-artists who have been trying to do that shunting. Yes, there has been quite a manipulation. They have done everything in the book, and some things not permitted by the book, to shunt Parliament to the sidelines to the extent that this Government has been obliged to find other mechanisms to get its messages across, to tell the people of Canada what it is doing as the Government and answering to the people of Canada.

It is true the Government has had to go across the road to the Press Club theatre or downstairs to the scrum room. We have had to go across the country calling press conferences, doing things that normally should have been done in this House. We recognize that. We also recognize the realities in this House, some very unpleasant realities because of the effort