

Procedure and Organization

observer, Mr. Speaker, can deny that a climate of tension prevails. There is bitterness and resentment on both sides of the house. Because of what happened, has the house the right morally to carry on its business? There will be doubts in that respect, as long as that rule 75c will keep on being brought before us.

I presume, Mr. Speaker, that we can say that nobody is overly impressed by efficiency as a means to carry out concrete programs in a democratic parliament.

It has been said that democracy would not even exist were it possible to establish other types even less desirable of government. I think that is true. In spite of all its deficiencies, it is the best system we could find. But in order to retain the respect of the people for it—and that is an important factor—it is therefore essential that the house should do nothing that might lead the people to believe that they are not well represented here, no matter whether they support the government or the opposition.

I have only one more word, Mr. Speaker, before I resume my seat. I quote Frank Oliver, another Liberal whom I particularly commend to the house. That man had said that closure is not a blow aimed at the opposition, but at the rights of Canadians. When a provision such as rule 75c is moved, it is a blow aimed straight at the heart of democracy.

The primary duty of a Parliament is to be a sovereign body, not a subordinate institution, of a purely decorative character. Parliament holds an undeniable right, transcending the whims of the Prime Minister, or of the President of the Privy Council, and that is the right to exist. That right, may I suggest, comes before the disappointments of the Prime Minister or of the Minister of Agriculture. Parliament has the obligation to prevent any encroachment on its rights and privileges. It is the will of Parliament and not that of the Prime Minister which represents the will of the country. When the Prime Minister suggests that he speaks for the whole country, he is mistaking the echo of his own words for the voice of the Canadian people.

Parliament is and must remain the approved representative of public opinion and public will. The people's sovereignty is delegated to parliament not to the executive, and when I say parliament, I mean the minority as well as the majority.

This parliament, this institution, should be the temple of freedom, not a place where

[Mr. Dumont.]

restraint and a false interpretation of the rules are used as a means to brush aside the rights, in order to gain some precarious advantage.

And before concluding my remarks, I can assure the house that I am wondering, in short, I am much concerned about the survival of democracy in Canada. That concern stems from the fact that the government is resorting a little too much to "Castro-type" methods. That is why those Castro-type methods, a concrete example of which can be found in 75c, will never get our support and the generations to come will commend us for having fought against the passage of this order which imposes dictatorship in this country.

[English]

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, before the debate continues may I say that I understand the discussions about government order No. 65 have been progressing favourably, and I believe there might now be agreement in the house to pass the order which I previously suggested. If that be the case I wonder whether we can temporarily interrupt this debate in order to call order No. 65 and put it through all stages?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Is this agreed.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

CANADA SHIPPING ACT

AMENDMENTS DEFINING "AIR CUSHION VEHICLE" AND CLARIFYING OTHER PROVISIONS—REPORT STAGE—
BILL No. S-23

The house proceeded to the consideration of Bill S-23, to amend the Canada Shipping Act, as reported (without amendment) from the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Before proceeding to the consideration of this bill, I should like to point out to the house that a notice of amendment appears on the order paper, in the name of the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Barnett) and—

[English]

I believe that the hon. member wishes to drop his notice of motion.

Mr. Barnett: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have agreed not to move that amendment.