

The Constitution

back through the mouth of the king who calls himself the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau).

In this, Parliament is the ultimate example. Parliament has become a sham. Members are elected by universal suffrage, by the ballot, and constituencies are marked with an eye to equity or at least the appearance of equity. Unfortunately, as we can see today, it is only a pretence. All that is left of this place in which we stand to speak is a pretence because, in fact, power is no longer here. Power is no longer vested in me through my constituents. It has been transferred directly, not by some minister with an idea, not by some political party, but by the Prime Minister of Canada. He has transferred the authority given to me by my people back to himself through his government and his cabinet.

How did we reach this stage, Mr. Speaker? Where did the power go? How did it slip away when we were all standing here thinking we were watching, so freely and openly? Who saw Parliament die? Did it die at the hands of a clever and devious tyrant?

An hon. Member: Yes.

Mr. Wenman: Was it smothered by the apathy of myself and my colleagues through being too comfortable? Was it through the expediency of your rules, Mr. Speaker? How did it happen? How did Parliament, how did this great place of debate and dignity, fall into such disrespect, such contempt? How did it arise that the Prime Minister can flaunt his arrogance? How can he flaunt that arrogance by appearing on television, instead of in this House of Commons, to present this motion? That is the ultimate arrogance in this situation. He has not appeared in this House of Commons to speak in this debate on this very resolution. He has bypassed the House of Commons on the basic debate, on what we are talking about today, and now he is bypassing the representation of the House.

In 1981 we have a new low in the House of Commons. Let this speech of the minister stand as a symbol to all Canadians of the travesty done to democracy. Let them see it as one more step. How can I tell members who support the government that the west does not want a cabinet minister representing me in the riding? The people want me to represent them. They chose me to represent Fraser Valley West. If hon. members opposite think that those constituents will put up with the arrogance of the king in appointing someone else, they will never grasp the true sentiment of the alienation felt in the west.

My constituents expect a fair forum to be created here so that hon. members opposite can hear what I have to say and respond to it accordingly. That is what the west wants. That is what democratic people across the nation want. They want a forum where all members can be heard. But do we get a forum where we can be heard, Mr. Speaker? No, we get closure. Our constituents send us here and then they say, "We do not hear our members speak." How can they hear their members speak when the government invokes the most obnoxious form of closure known to this House, to this Parliament, to the British parliamentary system?

Hon. members opposite want to have things all their way and they are destroying this nation. They are destroying this democracy and putting forth high-sounding words.

What good is this piece of paper, this Constitution, this bill of rights? What good is it to me or to the people of Canada if it is but a piece of paper and no respect is shown for this institution itself? It is nothing, and I am really sorry about that.

This is very symbolic of what is wrong in our country, about what is so wrong about this institution. This particular document is described as the best document in the world. That is a pretty broad statement and it was made by the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent). He claims modestly that this is the best document in the world. I suggest that his research has fallen short. After all, this document does not promise a "harmonious and happy society". There are constitutions that promote a harmonious and happy society. Those words are contained in the constitution of democratic Kampuchea. It was going to reform Cambodia. The first measure of reform was an act of genocide: the slaughter of 25 per cent of its people! Yet a "harmonious and happy society" is a written guarantee in its constitution. We have those guarantees, theoretically, in the Constitution of Canada. Ours does not go quite that far; this one is more elaborate.

The constitution of Chile declares that "Men are born free and equal and nobody may be deprived of his personal freedom." That is in the charter; it is a guarantee.

The Leader of the NDP claimed that ours is the greatest charter in the world. But he did not look at the charter of the Soviet Union. I do not say this facetiously, but the Soviet Union has one of the most elaborate, attractive and best constitutions in the world. It is all-encompassing. The Soviet constitution guarantees freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly meetings, street processions and demonstrations; it includes the privacy of citizens and their correspondence, telephone conversations and telegraphic communications. These are protected by law in a written constitution.

Our Constitution is more modest; it does not go that far. Does that make our Constitution better or worse? Not at all. What makes our Constitution more valuable is not what is written but instead what is contained in the basic philosophy, in the principles and values held by those who chose to be governed by this establishment. The people chose me, they chose all of us who sit here; they did not choose a person appointed by the Prime Minister.

This whole Constitution rests on the will of the people. That is why their participation is so important. That is why my participation, which has been diluted through restriction of opportunity and through closure, is so important. I think this point of principle and values is where it all rests.

● (1610)

That is why there was a little glimpse or opening in the committee's resolution which had something to do with philosophy, principles and values. As everyone knows, that is the Diefenbaker preamble. I can understand why my socialist