

Procedure and Organization

our former Governor General. Then we discovered that we were blaming the Secretary of State unfairly, because the orders had come from the Prime Minister's office. That was another indication of the government's cavalier disregard for precedent.

The Prime Minister went on to say in his speech:

There is abroad in Canada and elsewhere a spreading concern that the traditional techniques of governments are incapable of responding adequately and in time to the changing needs of society... We are given an opportunity in this place, in this session, which may not again present itself. It is the opportunity to prove to Canadians, ourselves included, that a parliamentary form of government is not only capable of meeting the demands of this complex age, but that it is more capable of doing so than is any other form.

That apparently is what is in the minds of the Prime Minister and his associates in seeking these powers.

Much was made of debates in previous years, but speeches were not read. I know the effect of strong debate on the part of the opposition. I have sat on both sides of the house. On one occasion when I was prime minister we brought in legislation we thought was good, only to discover after three or four members had examined it that something was wrong with it. You cannot have good legislation without debate, and it seems the government wants us to have a total of four days of debate only which is to be spread over a period of ten days. That is what the government wants.

The self-appointed prophets of radio, television, and the press say this matter is not very important. They talk about a mere 1 per cent of cases. It has been interesting to read Mr. Weasel—Westell, I beg your pardon. That was a slip of the tongue. But he and others like him certainly weaseled around and produced a eulogium on what is taking place here. They said to the opposition in effect, "What are you doing? You are boring us." Well, people like that must bore easily because you seldom see them in the gallery.

The attitude of this government has been one of wanting to trample on the rights of the opposition. The hon. gentleman who preceded me should have offered his remedy to the government. After all, it is the government that is all-powerful. The Prime Minister has said that this is a stupid filibuster. Well, the government cannot back up. It is caught in its own tangled web, and it must keep up appearances. The Leader of the Opposition has said that as long as 75c stands, so shall we stand against it.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Crouse: That message is loud and clear.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I say to the President of the Privy Council that while he may cow Liberal members, he cannot cow us.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): He tries to.

Mr. Diefenbaker: He will not get away with it. I want to be very fair with the President of the Privy Council. Only occasionally does he make a pilgrimage out in front of the house to tell the nation that he did not say what he is said to have said. Each day ministers treat this house with contempt, disregarding questions or answering flippantly. Sometimes, when they are caught and embarrassed, they rush out and in the ante-room of parliament tell the Canadian people what they did not say.

• (4:20 p.m.)

The government are making a caricature of this institution. They do not care about it. Tyranny has no conscience. Hon. gentlemen opposite want to drive this measure through, but they now find themselves caught.

I realize some hon. members sitting around me believed that all was going to be well in this parliament; that committees would be set up similar to those in the United States where partisanship does not always enter. But under our system of government they have found out that this cannot be. If Liberals on a committee voted contrary to what the government wanted, it would be a vote of non-confidence. Such cannot happen on United States committees.

I was particularly impressed by one of the hon. members from Nova Scotia who spoke yesterday. When mention was made of co-operation, he said that there had been too much co-operation, that we have spoiled the government. I told hon. members that if they fed these people opposite with power they would abuse it. If you compromise with them to reach agreement they will use that compromise as a method of denuding and deflowering the opposition. That has been the lesson over the years.

I like to see young backbenchers across the way laughing at my remarks, because that is about the only contribution they make. There are more young members of ability in this house than one sees in many parliaments. I read their speeches, and I could refer to two in particular that were delivered by Liberal members. Although I did not agree with their