

*Summer Recess*

have become when we look at some of the interventions in the last few days. It is obvious that while the rules of the Canadian Parliament are designed to protect the minority in Parliament, these rules were made in the last century on the basis of what we call the checks and balances of the British system and English fair play. However, these rules were never designed to give absolute power to an intransigent opposition which forcibly imposes its views and its instructions on a majority which was democratically elected by the Canadian people.

It is an undeniable fact, Mr. Speaker, that we have witnessed during this session an abuse of the technicalities of parliamentary procedure by the opposition parties, and especially by the Progressive Conservative opposition, in an attempt to counter the government's intentions and legislation. Parliament is undeniably the place where such issues should be debated, but it is first of all the place where legislation must be passed. And when the opposition abuses systematically its right to speak to prevent Parliament from voting, I suggest that our parliamentary procedure is seriously deficient and that we must soon correct this situation which allows Parliament to be held hostage by an inflexible and fanatical opposition. It is undeniable that we have not been able to dispose of a great many government measures because the opposition has insisted on extended debates, and even unacceptable debates in my opinion, because I remember interventions which were taken verbatim from previous speeches.

We have seen opposition members read word by word speeches made a few hours or a few days earlier by one of their colleagues, making exactly the same points, harking back to the same views. Not only did opposition members stage filibusters but they rehashed old speeches in order to hinder the normal parliamentary process. People who know the British system, the Parliament in Westminster, are fully aware that legislation introduced for second reading is passed on the same day. Second reading is an opportunity to consider the principle of a bill and the advisability of referring it or not to a committee where it can be examined clause by clause and amended if need be. Such a simple discussion on principle never requires more than one day in London. All important pieces of legislation introduced by the government during the course of the current session took hours and hours of repetitive debates by the opposition, and none of our bills was approved the same day. I find this quite unacceptable in a modern society that has a constant need of a vast number of measures from its central government.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we should stop to reflect on that sad state of affairs and as soon as possible after the summer recess ask for an in-depth, major reform of our parliamentary procedure. This would allow a freely elected government to do its work, admittedly with criticism from the opposition. Criticism however should be made with due form and within a reasonable time frame in modern society. And once the government has passed the legislation, the people can then judge

whether the government was right or wrong. But as things stand now, Mr. Speaker, I submit that the people cannot even judge whether the government's work is good or bad, because we have all the trouble in the world passing our legislation. We are impeded by a nineteenth century procedure that is no longer consistent with modern times and the hurried way of life of the twentieth century. In the few minutes left to me, I would like to say that the adjournment will have beneficial results on the current negotiations that have just started under the direction of Mr. Justice Gold, the mediator. Mr. Speaker, I think I have ten more minutes. Is this correct?

● (1450)

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** According to my information the minister's time will expire at 3.04 p.m.

[Translation]

**Mr. Ouellet:** Thank you Mr. Speaker. I still have some seven minutes left to explain to the Progressive Conservative members the serious mistake they made this week by delaying the settlement of the postal strike and leading the Canadian Union of Postal Workers to believe that back-to-work legislation would be introduced. It was obvious, Mr. Speaker, that as long as Parliament would be sitting no pressure would be applied on the union leaders to return to the bargaining table and reach a settlement regarding their collective agreement.

The easy way out for the Canadian Union of Postal Workers is to have a settlement imposed upon them rather than have to go back before their members and tell them: "Here is what the government is offering us, we could not get more, and we suggest that you accept the results of the negotiations just completed with management representatives.

It is always embarrassing and difficult for a union leader who promised them pie in the sky to tell his members that he cannot deliver. But as long as he can give as an excuse the drastic and unilateral effect of a piece of legislation to justify his action, then his honour is saved. That is the idea the Leader of the Opposition and the Progressive Conservatives have tried to plant in the mind of the union leaders all week long by protracting parliamentary business. Now that we are adjourning, I think that Judge Gold will be in a position to carry out his mediation efforts because the two parties, the postal workers and the Treasury Board, will know that the solution to the postal dispute is to be found through negotiation, through a negotiated settlement, because it is the only avenue left now to settle this dispute. I am convinced that this situation will be beneficial and will make things easier for Judge Gold as a mediator.

In closing, may I mention that the opposition has claimed that we want to adjourn Parliament to cover up the so-called uranium scandal. Mr. Speaker, I have been sitting here in Parliament for several years now; not a single year has gone by