

● (2100)

In the classical tradition of economics, there are two realms of economic activity. There is the domestic household, including farms, whose products are not valued (a housewife is not paid; the produce consumed on the farm is not always measured in GNP) because they are not exchanged in the market. And there is the market economy, where the value of goods and services is measured by the relative prices registered in the exchange of money.

Here is the important sentence:

But there is also now, more important than the other two—

And I presume the very reason for my colleague's resolution.

—a third sector which has come to the fore in the last 25 years, and which in the next 25 will play an even more crucial role, the public household. For reasons that I seek to make clear below, I prefer the term "public household," with its sociological connotations of family problems and common living, to the more neutral terms such as "public finance" or "public sector."

Bell goes on in an interesting article to elaborate the need, in this whole area of the public household, to exchange views and ideas, and to have some control over the purse strings. I do not want to stretch this analogy any further. I look to the treasury benches tonight, in thinking about public households, and wonder exactly how these learned gentlemen would fit into the public household. I suggest to them that if there were some exchange of information with those who are part of that household in regard to spending and budgets, then the administration of public funds would be much more open and amenable to the scrutiny that this resolution seeks to make possible.

I think that should be enough from me, Madam Speaker, and I should like to conclude by making three points about democracy and its governability. The first is that I hope most hon. members are as nervous as I am about my feeling that there should be retrenchment in the field of education. Though there will soon be a time when fiscal arrangements will have to be made between Canada and the provinces, there cannot surely be, at this stage in Canada's history, any retrenchment in the field of post-secondary education, or any attempt made to tie it to the job market. If this should occur, and if this policy were found acceptable, then as far as I am concerned it is the end of free inquiry by our universities. Certainly I hope that will not happen.

Secondly—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. gentleman but the time allotted to him has expired.

Mr. Fairweather: Madam Speaker, may I finish two sentences?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): It is agreed that the hon. member may complete his remarks?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Fairweather: I am very sorry, Madam Speaker; I do not like to take more than 20 minutes but obviously I have. I was making my second point, which is that there cannot be by government any restriction of free play on the part of the media. I am uncomfortable with the word "media" but it is a convenient word to use. I am made nervous by

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those people in society who feel there should be some restriction on some aspects of the media. I think probably in the next two years what we will need will be protection, not restriction, of the media.

Lastly, I want to make the point that most of us within the next few years are going to be increasingly aware that we are members, in one way or another, of large organizations. We each have a whole series of organizations to which we owe loyalty.

Once again I go back to the Montreal analogy. The group will be more important to many people than the larger loyalty, and I think this has serious policy implications for governments. I hope this group loyalty will always take second place to the loyalty that we owe to our country.

Mr. John M. Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Madam Speaker, what we are discussing today is a breakdown in the operations of the House of Commons. It is quite clear from hon. members who have spoken that there is a great deal of disquiet about the way in which the House of Commons is operating and the way in which it discharges its duties.

I agree with the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin), who has moved the motion, that the power of the executive has increased and is increasing. The reason for this is twofold. First of all, the House of Commons has taken many decisions over the last few years. In the ten years that I have been in the House of Commons I have seen parliament give the executive great power to do things on behalf of the Canadian people. Much of the power that the executive has acquired it has acquired because the parliament of Canada has given it that power. Along with that power and authority to do certain things, parliament has also provided spending power.

The executive is also increasing its power in another and very important way. In order to cope with the problems of the 1970's the executive has gone through a number of reorganizations. It has focused on the problems it has had in trying to deliver services. It has analysed those problems and come up with solutions to them. Consequently the executive, I believe, has been able to keep in touch and deliver services more in keeping with the changes in Canadian society that have taken place.

However, contrast this with the way in which the House of Commons operates. The House of Commons operates in a way that would be appropriate if society were at the level it was in about 1900, a time when society was quiet and the demands put upon its politicians and its legislative apparatus were much less. It was a time when there were practically no demands for the involvement of members of parliament and ministers in many of the operations with which they are now concerned. By being able to cope with these problems of supplying today's services and being able to reorganize itself, the executive arrogated a great amount of power unto itself, putting a greater distance between it and the House of Commons.

I believe the reason for this is that the House of Commons has never been able to focus upon what its relationship toward society at large should be. Because it has not attempted to focus upon this issue, it has not been able to cope as effectively with the changes going on in society as has the executive. What frightens me about this is the lack