

*Government Orders*

rule of the House. This may be debated another time because of the intervention of the member for York Centre. The very fact that the government Whip should have known better, but who obviously does not, is one of the reasons we are debating this notice of motion tonight. No government in the history of the Parliament of Canada, no government in the history of the Parliament of England has ever tried to have this motion debated in their respective Houses of Commons.

For some 20 years I sat as an hon. member of the opposition with a government party called the Progressive Conservatives, and I do not regret that too much. But, my goodness gracious, Mr. Speaker, if I had not bolted a year ago, I think I would have bolted tonight, when I heard the government Whip answering the member for Winnipeg North Centre on the fundamental reason why we are here: do we spend the public money in a proper way?

The whole essence of the thing is that it is not answered unless you at least go through the formality. We know the minister of the Crown here, and I am glad she is here—or another minister—is not going to really listen and/or take all the points of view. It is at least, however, a recognition of the principle of the power of the purse. The people send us here, pay us good money, give us good pensions, give us good perks and we are supposed to debate the public purse. My gosh, this is the first time in the 26 years I have been here that I have not seen a minister of the Crown to, in effect, defend the Crown, defend the spending of the public money, as the member for Winnipeg North Centre mentioned.

The Associate Minister of Defence had better not laugh. She has a beautiful smile and she is a lovely person. But I am suggesting that one of the reasons the government is in total trouble today is because they do not understand certain basics. One of the basics is Parliament. The Prime Minister never earned his spurs. He did not come up through the ranks. He won the leadership of my party. I supported somebody else. That may have been part of my problem. But he never earned it, he never sat here. I agree we sit here too long.

But for the government Whip to come in here and try to justify the unjustifiable was something.

I am going to get down to the motion. I know the public watches this on television and they might not understand this. I quite agree with the earlier comments of other colleagues. I am not going to get into the different bills involved. Quite frankly, sitting in the opposition, understanding the procedures of the House, I have sometimes wondered: why do all bills die in a prorogation and then you have to bring them back?

• (1840 )

This is why I am horrified by the Speaker's decision. There was a timetable with the opening of Parliament and a prorogation. The timetable was like a person going to the gallows, it helped to focus attention on the bills in question. We know a lot of bills go through by consent, others are debated too long, some are debated fairly, but then comes the end of Parliament. A summer recess is okay, but we come to a prorogation which is the termination of that session, historically—for 124 years in this Parliament—it was time to focus attention on what was left on the Order Paper. It was the time that government and opposition got together and, often by unanimous consent, agreed on a legislative package of bills which were read and approved.

I listened to my hon. friend, who is a good parliamentarian and one of the better, as far as I am concerned, from Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, make a very passionate speech about two or three hours ago condemning the government. I am not going to agree with everything he said because the opposition has to bear some of the responsibility for what we are facing tonight. The opposition has to decide when it is going to draw the proverbial line in the sand. When is the opposition going to stop agreeing and doing things by consent?

We cannot adjourn Parliament as we adjourned it three or four times in this most unusual year of Parliament—on, Parliament—off, Parliament adjourned, Parliament called back. In my experience I have never seen a more hiccup period of Parliament. We hiccup on for two or three weeks, then we hiccup off, then we take another lozenge and come back and hiccup this way and that. The opposition had better smarten up, it had better decide what it is going to agree on.