

Procedure and Organization

An hon. member of this house—I shall not pinpoint him—said not very long ago that by the time the new rules are passed we will not recognize parliament. I wonder what was meant by that. I wonder what legislation will be brought forward by the government during the next session.

Mr. Bell: "President" Trudeau.

Mr. MacEwan: There will perhaps be changes in taxation and welfare. One morning, as I was walking to the house with a government member—

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): You are a pretty broadminded guy, Russ.

Mr. MacEwan: —he asked how many members there were from the province I have the honour to represent. I told him. He said, "That is too many. I represent a large city constituency and I do not think it is right that your province has so many members." I said, "Try and change it. The number of members from my province is provided for in the legislation of this land. The members from my province can be no fewer than the number of senators". He said, "We will change that". Perhaps this is the thinking of the government, namely, to change the British North America Act and the number of members who have the right to represent the provinces of this country. Perhaps that is why the government brought forward 75c.

The hon. member spoke about rules and said, "We will try these rules, and if they do not work we will change them". I wonder who will change them. What faith can we have in this government when the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) at New Year's said, after rule 16A had been withdrawn after the great speech of the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. MacEachen), who came to the front today and rolled into the aisle to speak—he is always brought forward on occasions such as this—

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): He is a great Nova Scotian.

Mr. MacEwan: He is a member from Nova Scotia; in fact, the only one on the other side. At one time we enjoyed the fact that in parliament there was no Grit from my province. That will happen again.

An hon. Member: And very soon.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): One to ten is good odds.

[Mr. MacEwan.]

Mr. MacEwan: The grandfather of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) came from Nova Scotia.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): From your county.

Mr. MacEwan: I think the minister has forgotten that, because he is supporting these proposed rules. We Nova Scotians care for democracy and I am surprised at the attitude of the minister in this regard.

Mr. Bell: He deserted Quebec.

Mr. MacEwan: The hon. member for New Westminster said the government would change the rules if necessary. What faith can we have in this government when just after rule 16A was withdrawn the Prime Minister, in a television interview, told the Canadian people, "We are not really interested in changing the rules too much. All we did was suck the opposition in so they would accept a certain part of the rules which were put forward"? How can we believe a Prime Minister who makes such a statement?

The hon. member for New Westminster said that some members have been here too long. Perhaps they have. The Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Côté) has been here too long. He is collecting taxes, and that will not help him in the future; people may hold a personal grudge against him. It is not for the hon. member for New Westminster, the Prime Minister or any member of the government to tell me, the member for Central Nova, that I have been here too long. The people of Canada decide that.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. MacEwan: The area I represent does not have any beetroot growers, as has the hon. member for Essex (Mr. Whelan); we have coal miners, farmers, fishermen and shipyard workers who are in favour of democracy. They sent me and other members to this house. I suggest it is not for the government to introduce rules to muzzle members of parliament.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): Don't forget they are Liberals, Russ.

Mr. MacEwan: That is right. The question was asked: What is the government trying to do? The simple answer is that it is trying to control the procedures of the house; in other words, it is trying to make parliament the errand boy of the government. One of our oldest traditions is that parliament controls