

*Summer Recess*

Mr. Speaker, everything I have just said can be summarized and used to describe a certain type of opposition, that is, a superficial opposition, never interested in suggesting solutions or amendments, in improving policies, a reactionary opposition embittered by its defeat in the last election and, as a result, definitely irresponsible and infantile. Mr. Speaker, I have just heard my colleague the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) say "Ho, ho." He is right, and he will certainly recognize that to incapacitate this institution for 16 days, causing the bells to ring in the passageways . . . at least, when he was his party's House leader, he had the good sense never to do that and I am sure that if he had had his way, he would have never had the indecency to start these bells ringing. And when he says "Ho, ho," I agree with him, unless he wants to contradict me, which I doubt.

Mr. Speaker, I say that this is a negative and infantile opposition, and it is unfortunate in the present circumstances, because Canada, a country with tremendous human and material resources, with diverse cultures and regions, is not spared by the economic crisis that is currently affecting all industrialized nations. At the same time, we know that as soon as we see signs of an economic recovery throughout the world, Canada, which has an economic base, will get back on its feet very rapidly bringing back prosperity to every region and every citizen in this country.

During these hard times, the Opposition should be eager to present its views in a constructive fashion without losing political ground. Unfortunately, that is not the case. And do not bring up the matter of the current polls because they do not reflect in any way what is going on in the House of Commons. They are only indications of a temporary discontent, caused by the recession, and they are found everywhere in the world: there is not a single government in the world today that has the support of the people because of economic problems and because of the recession.

But getting back to the sense of responsibility expected from hon. members of the House, I feel that the Opposition should have used every opportunity to deal with this legislation, to suggest amendments in an effort to improve it in order to really help people get over these difficult times and who did not deserve to have its legislative body incapacitated through tactics that were somewhat questionable, infantile and irresponsible. Under these circumstances, Mr. Speaker, I regret this type of opposition, and I repeat that there is no cause and effect relationship between what has taken place in this House of Commons—in fact we were more productive than ever before in our past history—and the government's temporary loss in popularity. Quite the contrary, Mr. Speaker; it seems that over the past few weeks, Canadians have finally come to realize the true nature and value of this government and that they have had a change of heart which will make it possible for the government to keep on assuming its responsibilities to ensure their wellbeing, and that they will get back at the Opposition for its destructive attitude over the past few months. I think that in the long run, the effects of this negative

attitude will work against the opposition, and I am certain that those members of Parliament who supported the tactics aimed at incapacitating such a respectable institution as the Canadian Parliament, who boldly deprived our society of its essential and fundamental forum of expression, will pay dearly for their complicity in an action that was altogether uncalled for and that brought no practical gain to the official opposition.

• (2100)

[*English*]

During this session, the House considered three budgets, two economic statements, and passed spending estimates for four fiscal years. The National Energy Program was put in place; major revisions were made to the Bank Act; the national anthem was formally approved; the Canada Post Corporation was created, the Access to Information Act was passed and a huge legislative backlog was cleared up.

Major committee reports were received and special parliamentary task forces reported on alternative energy and oil substitution; the disabled and the handicapped; employment opportunities for the '80s, North-South relations; regulatory reform; a national trading corporation; implementation of the Helsinki Final Act; acid rain; federal-provincial fiscal arrangements; Canadian relations with Latin America and the Caribbean; the Armed Forces reserves; domestic air carrier policy; security and disarmament issues, and several other matters.

I remain convinced that if on the one hand it is true to say that this session has established a record for length, almost 400 sitting days, on the other hand, as parliamentarians, at least on this side of the House, we must be proud to be able to say that it is the most productive session ever. It was able to adopt some 140 bills or government measures including private members' business. It was a session in which we were able to adopt the resolution on the Constitution; the national energy policy; three budgets; two economic statements and the estimates of four different fiscal years. All that put together makes me conclude that in fact if we compare this with previous sessions in the history of the country, it has been far and away the most productive ever.

If we take into consideration the importance of the measures that were debated we can say that it was a record session. The measures have an historic aspect that was most important. As a matter of fact, it was a record session for length, substance and production.

On the other hand, the spirit that animated the debate, or lack of debate for a while, during those two years, three months and a few days, has struck me more than anything else. The need for reform has become more and more obvious. That is why, a few months ago, the government decided to strike a special committee composed of 20 members from both sides of the House. They have started work and will look into changes that could render this institution more relevant and at the same time, we hope, more human and more modern.