

Supply

This subject shows a lack of initiative, lack of creativity, lack of innovation, lack of imagination and lack of will. This convinces me that they are not only tired, but exhausted of all possible energies needed to bring forward something that would be of substantive contribution to the operation of Parliament.

● (1630)

The other day they had an Opposition motion, which could have contained a very important topic. The Opposition took up the whole day talking about what it would like to see done about tourism. I support tourism. There is no question but that it is a very important subject. In the Atlantic Provinces alone, tourism is among the top three revenue earners of that area. There is no question in anybody's mind—

An Hon. Member: We are all for tourism.

Mr. Harquail: Yes, all for tourism, and always have been. I think Canada has an excellent reputation for providing hospitality to all who come to this great country. With the problems the country is facing today, if the best the Opposition can do on an Opposition Day is bring in the subject of tourism to give a few Members an opportunity to talk about special projects in their own particular ridings, that to me shows a complete lack of understanding of the role and responsibilities of the Opposition.

An Hon. Member: They are desperate.

Mr. Harquail: Yes. That has been said before and I think it proves the point. It is a desperate Party. Last week it was tourism, this week they want to talk about the Speech from the Throne. All winter the Opposition did not cease calling for a budget. Now Hon. Members contradict themselves by proposing a delay of the budget so they can get on with a Speech from the Throne. It has been said many times that they cannot have it both ways. At some point they must have a discussion with their Acting Leader, and a meeting with their House Leader, to try at least to get their act together and decide what they want to proceed with first.

First, they hounded for months about the need for a budget. With present conditions of the country and the economy, no one could disagree that we must have a budget. Everybody knows that the Government is now prepared. Tomorrow evening we will have the budget.

The 16 days of bell-ringing—16 days of tying up, hijacking, hostage-taking, call it what you will—delaying in fact the business of this House, flies in the face of democracy and in the face of the very principles of this House. These people who hold up so highly the importance of protecting the rights of the people and the importance of this institution by delaying the proceedings of the House for 16 days, were denying the Canadian people legislation. We could have had two Speeches from the Throne during that 16-day period and really tried to accomplish something.

I am convinced Mr. Speaker, as are all Canadians who follow the political scene, and are concerned with the future of the country of the total confusion that exists within the Official Opposition. We know the pains its Members are now

going through to provide the country with a leader for that Party. They have totally turned away from the responsibilities and the duties they have to the day-to-day workings of this House, by not producing substantive motions on Opposition Days. That, I think, has to be of concern to everyone.

Another element to be considered is that perhaps there are hidden tactics within their motion today. They have asked for a budget. We are to have a budget delivered by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) tomorrow night. They are asking for a Speech from the Throne at the same time. Perhaps it is to give some of their hopeful leadership candidates that eight extra days to roam the country looking for delegates. One does not really know. One cannot see any logic so one cannot conclude what exactly it is they want or what they are attempting to do.

Tomorrow evening the Minister of Finance will present his budget. This will be the fourth budget in this session, coupled with two economic statements. This means the Government has reported to the House on the state of the economy on a semi-annual basis.

Similarly, at the beginning of each trimester, the Government House Leader outlined in writing the legislative intentions of the Government. He has also adopted the practice of making this outline public. This has not produced much co-operation from the Official Opposition. The response every time has not been to express their opposition in an effective manner by voting, but by talking on and on when they really do not have any idea what they want to say. Rather, as I mentioned earlier, they ring the bells and assault and insult the Chair. That has to be the most unacceptable act in the proceedings of this House. No Hon. Member should tolerate that, and yet that is what we had to suffer through.

On the Bank Act revisions, for instance they took 14 hours and 22 minutes on Second Reading, 50 hours and 15 minutes in committee, 18 hours and 12 minutes at Report Stage and 6 hours and 10 minutes at Third Reading. They then used more than 90 hours on a Bill that had been before the House and the public for over five years. Is that an indication of their spirit of co-operation?

There are many other examples of this type of needless delay by a Party whose Members talk of getting on with the job of getting things done, of doing things for Canadians and trying to help them, yet march into the House and deliberately filibuster and delay effective legislation.

There have been many examples of this kind. The Opposition has been so unco-operative it has been necessary to use other rules, not because we like to have to use them, but because this has been forced upon Members of Parliament. By its actions, the Opposition has held the Canadian people as hostages, people who have vested in them a certain trust. That has to be a sad commentary on what the Opposition is trying to do.

All Canadians are currently very much aware of the action that was taken as a result of the Speech from the Throne, the legislation that has been accomplished over these many history-making days. These accomplishments include responding to the individual needs by promoting greater security for