

*Procedure and Organization*

or lunch with the great man, and while they gazed at the spire of a church on the Quebec side of the river he plied her with a very pleasant, dry, light wine. I suspect that the young lady went back to New York still with her mind floating around cloud nine.

There comes a time when traditional liberalism, or the philosophy of that great political party, should be set forth for the benefit of those who up to now have perhaps forgotten the great heritage they enjoyed in the past. I think logically one starts with John Stuart Mill. In this article in the *New Yorker* the Prime Minister is quoted as saying he does not read very much of John Stuart Mill. John Stuart Mill was a man who worked for the India Company for a long time. He had a great deal of practical experience. He was one of the most gifted minds of the 19th century. He served as a Liberal member in the English parliament for one term. I suppose that explains why the Prime Minister does not read him. If he does not listen to present Liberal members of parliament, there is no reason why he should read the words of a former Liberal member of parliament who is now dead.

The Prime Minister's reading, as he told the young woman reporter of the *New Yorker*, is of writers like Dostoevski, whom he enjoys. I suppose those Liberals who wondered why they were called idiots might find consolation in reading that great Russian's works. He enjoys reading Stendahl and Tolstoy. Stendahl's work "The Red and the Black" tells the story of a young man on the make. I suppose it offered useful instruction to a middle-aged, single Prime Minister. But in so far as John Stuart Mill is concerned, the Prime Minister has not read much of his work. I suppose the fact that Mill had served at Westminster, and with the Liberal party, made him suspect.

But one of the great works, one that probably should be on every parliamentarian's desk—and I suppose none of us have it there; we all have to run to the library if we want to read it—is J. S. Mill "On Liberty, Etc." I shall read excerpts from that work because it is important to give a refresher course, even if it is to be only 40 minutes, to my hon. friends on the Liberal side. J. S. Mill, dealing with the principles of the liberty of thought and discussion, has some very interesting observations. I quote from chapter II of his work on the liberty of thought and discussion:

In speaking generally, it is not, in constitutional countries, to be apprehended, that the government,

whether completely responsible to the people or not, will often attempt to control the expression of opinion, except when in doing so it makes itself the organ of the general intolerance of the public. Let us suppose, therefore, that the government is entirely at one with the people, and never thinks of exerting any power of coercion unless in agreement with what it conceives to be their voice. But I deny the right of the people to exercise such coercion, either by themselves or by their government. The power itself is illegitimate. The best government has no more title to it than the worst.

In other words, interrupting the flow of that great English writer's thoughts, the argument that the power would never be abused amounts to nothing. It does not go to the heart of the problem with which we are dealing, because it may be abused at some time. It could be abused not at all. It could be abused 100 per cent. But it is not germane to the argument. Continuing with Mr. Mill:

It is as noxious, or more noxious, when exerted in accordance with public opinion, than when in opposition to it.

Later in this speech, the next or the next, I am going to make the point that the Prime Minister has gone around following a consistent policy of denigrating the institution of which he is supposed to be the greatest champion and upholder. I give him that great line of William Lyon Mackenzie King and say "in spades" on that one, because to me this is the most horrible characteristic the Prime Minister shows, namely, to shrug and pretend he is the great white champion between the people and the House of Commons. But I must not get too enthusiastic about the speech after the next one, and shall continue with the quick refresher course to be obtained from Mr. John Stuart Mill's work:

If all mankind minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind. Were an opinion a personal possession of no value except to the owner; if to be obstructed in the enjoyment of it were simply a private injury, it would make some difference whether the injury was inflicted only on a few persons or on many. But the peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is, that it is robbing the human race; posterity as well as the existing generation; those who dissent from the opinion, still more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth: if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error.

Can we not think of examples in this parliament, and more particularly in the last one, where we had more loose fish—I think that was an expression used by Sir John A.