

Byelections

not to hold his breath in terms of getting support from the NDP on this particular issue. All they are saying now is that they will talk about it, but they may come down on both sides of it as they did on the guns and butter issues last February, and as they are doing on the referendum issue right now. Unfortunately they are on both sides of that one too. They will help the hon. member in committee. They will do some talking for him, but I hope he does not count on their vote.

I say to my hon. friend, the hon. member for Crowfoot, that he can count on my vote if it comes to the committee because I support the principle of the amendment he proposes in this chamber today. The principle is good, and I agree with his sentiments that the people of any particular constituency in this country should not be victimized by being without representation in their Parliament because of circumstances beyond their control, such as the death of the incumbent or the resignation, for whatever reason, of the incumbent. I do not think anybody in this chamber can dispute the principle of his bill.

I want to raise with the hon. member one other matter. I listened very carefully to what he had to say in respect of Bill C-209, and he did not say where his party stood on this particular piece of legislation. I waited to hear that. We all know what happened to the gentleman who rose to speak at the same time I did, that hon. member who sponsored what may well be, or would have been but for his leader, a history-making resolution in this chamber late last week.

Those two members, the hon. member for Crowfoot, and the hon. member who proposed the resolution the other day, ought to get together, because I suggest to my friend, the hon. member for Crowfoot, that his colleague had a very bitter experience the other day. He moved a resolution which had the unanimous support of those in the chamber at that particular time, and I say to him that is what is important. Those who were in the chamber at that time, including the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), the opposition House leader and the House leader for the New Democratic Party, supported the resolution unanimously. However, the hon. member's mistake, and I wonder if it may also have been the mistake of the hon. member for Crowfoot is that he did not check with his interim leader.

● (1750)

His mistake is that he did not ask the interim leader, the hon. member for Yellowhead (Mr. Clark), where he stood on the issue. But then he found out, to his sorrow, where his interim leader stood. Not only did he find out, but the whole country found out that the hon. member for Yellowhead wanted to bog the issue down further. He, too, wanted to be on both sides of the issue. With that kind of unqualification, the Leader of the Opposition should be leading the NDP.

What I would like to ask the hon. member for Crowfoot, who sponsored this very commendable piece of legislation, is where does his party stand on this bill? Is it unanimously for his bill? Does that unanimity include the Leader of the Opposition? The hon. member nods in agreement.

Mr. Malone: You will recall that he called the last two byelections.

Mr. Simmons: I am glad that the hon. member for Crowfoot has reminded us of the two byelections. I, together with my good friend, the hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Hovdebo), was involved in those byelections. The hon. member has done his homework on those points very well. I was very impressed with his knowledge of who had died and when, and why they died. One thing which the hon. member avoided saying was that in the one or two cases where, during a Tory government in this country, there were byelections in this country one of them was in the riding of Burin-St. George's, which I have the honour to represent.

The byelection was made necessary by the resignation of the Hon. Don Jamieson on either May 29 or May 30, as I recall. The election took place fully six months later. I say to the hon. member for Crowfoot that if he has the unanimous backing of his party now, including the backing of his interim leader from Yellowhead, congratulations, because he has arranged for the member for Yellowhead to have yet another about-face. It will pale into insignificance in terms of the Jerusalem about-face, the flip-flop on the embassy.

The other flip-flop which we could talk about is the flip-flop on no tax increases. Indeed, that party intended to cut taxes by \$3 billion until "merchant John" for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie) got hold of the Department of Finance and threw all of the budget cuts out the window. Instead of the \$3 billion in cuts, we were suddenly hearing about great tax increases. That party is good at flip-flops, but that is another issue.

An hon. Member: What does it have to do with the issue?

Mr. Simmons: It does not have a lot to do with the issue. It is just a simple little example for simple little people so that they may understand what I am talking about, particularly the people in the NDP. Sometimes one must talk in parables in order to get one's point through to certain people, and if that becomes necessary I will do so. I am making the point that if the hon. member for Crowfoot has indeed succeeded in getting unanimity within his party on this matter, then I say congratulations to him, because he has done something which the people of Canada could not do with this particular leader of that party.

Last week I and everybody in this chamber were party to what could have been a history-making resolution. But then outside this chamber the hon. Leader of the Opposition scuttled the entire action of this Parliament. Before I can vote for this bill before us today, I would like to know whether he intends to continue that kind of despicable practice. The hon. member is not here to speak to the bill. Is he conveniently absent? Does he agree with it? I know what the Leader of the Opposition did in the case of the Burin-St. George's riding—he held off for six months, and all the time I was itching to get here. For six full months he held off.

Now what are we told, that he has had another change of heart, another Damascus Road experience? Has he suddenly