

Regrettably, however, the motion stands in the name of the Hon. Member for Yukon. We heard a lot of hollow bravado from him today. I think I should set the record straight on some of the points he made. He accused the Government of deliberately and persistently undermining the parliamentary process and flouting parliamentary traditions. First of all, he spent a lot of time complaining about the role of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) with regard to a debate on international affairs and the fact that he released a public letter on the subject of the Cruise. Let us see whether that is a legitimate point. I do not think so.

The Government House Leader (Mr. Pinard) pointed out that there are 25 Opposition days per year and this subject could have been chosen at any time and we would have had a debate in the House. There have been 11 supply days since Easter, but the Opposition always opted for something else. That is fine, but it is difficult to have it both ways. In the old days, I am told, we used to have a two-day debate on international affairs. I suggest that the Hon. Member for Yukon has a selective memory. I pointed out to him that in the early part of this session, last July, we had a two-day debate on international affairs, and that it was taken from Government time. The Hon. Member for Yukon jumped up and said that what I was saying was a crock of rhubarb. He did not dispute its validity or veracity, but he injected that silly little note into the debate. As far as I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, next week cannot come too soon if that is the level of debate we are going to get from the Leader of the Opposition.

There was also a Private Members' debate on the subject of the Cruise. The motion stood in the name of the Hon. Member for The Battlefords-Meadow Lake (Mr. Anguish). On this side of the House we gave unanimous consent to allowing that matter to go to the top of the list. One Conservative Member, I believe it was the Hon. Member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) objected and so we could not go that route. When we got to the other Private Member's Bill that was set down for that day there was a vote that we go to another one, and we on this side supported that vote unanimously.

With regard to the letter the Prime Minister released, it is on record that he has received thousands and thousands of letters regarding the Cruise, so he wanted to send out a statement that responded to them in a comprehensive way. That is a legitimate action and he would probably be criticized if he threw all those letters in the garbage and did not respond. It seems that you cannot have it both ways.

The Leader of the Opposition complained about the role of the Prime Minister at Williamsburg as if this had something to do with flouting parliamentary tradition. He said it was unbecoming of the Canadian Prime Minister to play the role of an umpire between the two super powers. I think he is a little too close to the action to be objective about that. In response to questions almost daily in the House in recent months, particularly in answer to questions from the NDP, the Prime Minister has reiterated that there is Canadian Government support for remaining in NATO, and he has reiterated our support for the Western Alliance. I feel proud that the Prime Minister and the

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Government remain firm on our role as part of the NATO Alliance while, nevertheless, wanting to exercise a moderating influence on issues relating to disarmament.

Perhaps the world press is more objective than the press at home but it has said that the Prime Minister was one of the leading figures at the Williamsburg Summit. Quite frankly, I was proud of the role he played there.

The Leader of the Opposition complained that after we had a budget the ink was hardly dry before we had another. That is a bit of an exaggeration; it is what he said, but he is used to exaggeration. I can hardly recall a day after recent budgets when he was not on his feet demanding a new budget, so he cannot have it both ways.

The Hon. Leader of the Opposition complained that the Government is too interventionist, yet he is always complaining that we did not intervene enough with regard to unemployment. Does he think that everyone should be put on the Government payroll in order to solve unemployment? He complained that we were not intervening enough on interest rates either. Does he suggest we should be subsidizing them? Is this what we get from the Leader of a Party that is supposedly a great free enterprise Party, one that believes in market forces?

Those are the points the Leader of the Opposition made today. It was a lot of hot air and not worthy of someone who holds what I believe to be a very important position in our Parliament, that of Leader of the Opposition.

The Hon. Member for St. John's East pointed out that Parliament is in trouble. I think there are a number of reasons for that, Mr. Speaker, and I shall try to be objective. Part of the problem is that the Official Opposition has never been able to forget the last election. It has been demoralized by it to some extent; it has been divided; it has had leadership problems, and I think the outcome of the election in which this Party won all seats in Quebec but one, and was blanked out in the three most western Provinces, has to some extent contributed to regional divisions in the country. This has shown up on such matters as the Constitution and the Crow rate.

The Official Opposition has tended to distract public attention from its internal problems by precipitating crises in the House. I refer to such things as the ringing of bells, over 100 points of order, spurious questions of privilege on the Constitution and slowing down the legislative process to a crawl. Yet, if one reads the polls, perhaps it has been done with apparent immunity and impunity, because it has been doing well in the polls. I hope that Hon. Members opposite will not think that this is because of the Opposition's tactics. I think it is doing well in the polls in spite of those tactics and because we have gone through a very rough economic period. Any Government which would be in office would probably suffer the fate we have. I do not believe it is because of those tactics. I feel that when we move into a new phase, after the events of this weekend have occurred, hopefully that approach, trying to make Parliament work or not work, will be forgotten and it will be approached with a more positive attitude.