

Government Orders

the papers, watch television, listen to radio and read the polls and you will discover how people feel about this government.

An hon. member: Fourteen per cent.

Mr. Harvard: It is totally and completely out of touch. What it is doing in the House here today is just another example of that. It would not do anything like this. No government would want to resurrect a bill that was deemed dead some time in the past. This is what this government is doing.

An hon. member: It does not have anything else to do.

Mr. Harvard: It seems to me that this government does not want any kind of opposition, no kind of irritant. If there is an irritant, if there is an obstacle, if there is an impediment to its juggernaut, then by God it is going to move it out of its way. It is so arrogant it believes that what it does is right. It is hardly even worth debate. If there is going to be any debate, it will not put up with it very long, because it has a Draconian device, a Draconian mechanism called closure. If you deign and if you dare say anything in opposition to the government's proposals or to its motions, it will cut you off.

• (1920)

It will gag you with something called closure. The government has used it over and over again.

I believe it has come to the end of the line and I know that it has come to the end of the public's tether. People are fed up. They are sick and tired of this arrogance, this approach.

When Canadians went to the polls in 1988, they elected a Parliament. They elected 295 representatives. Regardless of party stripe, they expected us to do a job. In the case of the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party, who found themselves in opposition after the election, they expected us to do our job to fulfil the role of opposition. They want us to oppose. They want us to scrutinize. They want us to examine everything that this government does.

We are all imperfect human beings, but I do think that we try hard. The government obviously takes a different tack. It has a different idea. It apparently feels that when Canadians went to the polls and made their collective decision in 1988, they had elected a government with a

full and complete mandate that was more or less a dictatorship. It did not have to pay attention to the traditions of this House. It did not have to pay attention to the opposition, to rules, or to regulations. After all, it was given this mandate, this right to rule, this right of Tory rule which should not be questioned.

Canadians disapprove of this style of government, they disapprove of it vigorously and they will show their disapproval at the next election.

A motion like this does not draw a lot of public attention. A motion like this should draw considerable public attention, but it does not. One of the reasons it does not is that we live in the television age and television relies on pictures with lots of action, lots of movement. Television does not like talking heads. Even if the talking heads make a lot of sense, television is not really interested.

We talk about this matter in the House of Commons and it is not going to turn Peter Mansbridge on, it is not going to turn his producer on. You can say the same for Lloyd Robertson and for the anchorperson over at Global. This is not good television. However, just because it is not good television does not detract from its importance. Not on your life.

We are talking about a tradition, a convention in the House that should be respected. After all, we have rights on this side of the House. We have a job to do and I would hope that this government would show some respect for the opposition. It can do its job. It can push through its agenda as much as it likes, but it should show respect for this side of the House.

The government may not realize it, but this side of the House is just as important as that side of the House. The government has its role, it has its function, and we have ours. Unfortunately, I think we find ourselves in a situation where, because of the kind of presidential system adopted by this Prime Minister and by this government, we do not have the sufficient checks in the system that we should have. Maybe the founders of our parliamentary system never thought we would come to this stage. Yet we have.

We are going to have to rethink this process. We cannot continue on with a government that continues to batter away at this House and batter away at its tradi-