

Procedure and Organization

to second thoughts. Why should he make the same mistake, one which shows complete lack of understanding and of respect for parliament? Is the Prime Minister that accident prone? Is this a death wish shared by the cabinet? There is mounting evidence that a number of Liberal backbenchers are reluctant to be a part of this new charge of the Light Brigade. They would rather have a more viable cause for which to lay down their political lives. The hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. Hogarth) indicated very well his reluctance about Rule 75c when he said it was too late now to back out of this position.

Let me point out that this is precisely the same mistake that was made once years ago by another Liberal government. This was back in 1956 when the Liberal government had a muscleman who also got himself confused with God. Among other lordly utterances of his were the famous "What's a million", and "Who is to stop us?" These off-the-cuff remarks had about the same slow-burn effect on the public as the more up to date remarks "There is no housing crisis" and "Why should I sell the Canadian farmer's wheat?"

The effect in 1956 was to bring about the defeat of an arrogant government and to scatter its shattered remnants throughout the valley of desolation, where they wandered for years. The valley is still there, waiting. Parliament cannot be mocked or manoeuvred with impunity. Parliament has its defenders in this chamber as this debate amply testifies. As we fight on, the forces of public opinion outside are growing and will continue to grow as people realize more and more fully just what is at stake.

Who is to stop us, asks the present government as they bring down the guillotine. Let them reflect at this eleventh hour on the fact that this house is one of the few remaining places in Canada where the Liberal party remains in power today. Of course, there is Newfoundland. The Liberals are pretty rocky there as the stalwart contingent of opposition M.P.s from that province demonstrate in this Chamber. There is Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick, both with strong and effective shock troops here. Lastly there is Saskatchewan. Having recently experienced public sentiment there, I should think the Prime Minister would realize that there are times when discretion is the better part of valour, unless of course the urge for political suicide becomes too strong on his part to be resisted.

The truth is that Canadians are becoming sick and tired of being fobbed off by grand gestures and empty phrases about participatory democracy and the just society. They want a start on the real thing. Province by province they are turning away from the Liberal party which tries to be all things to all men—and women—and ends up being nothing to anyone.

● (11:00 p.m.)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mrs. MacInnis: Now, while there is still time, the once-great Liberal party would do well to look to its age-old traditions of free speech and free assembly. It used to be proud of the fact that it had those traditions. Unless it can reverse the step it proposes to take tonight, this government is headed for the boneyard of history. Already in British Columbia it is being written off in the forthcoming election.

In this modern age, when two men have set foot on the moon through the co-operative effort of thousands of people the world over, any petty attempt by a minor tyrant to stifle free speech in Canada's parliament is doomed to ignominious failure.

Mr. H. Russell MacEwan (Central Nova): Mr. Speaker, since the commencement of this very important debate on rule changes I have listened fairly constantly to it. I listened this evening to the hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. Hogarth), who sat on the justice committee. The hon. member's approach to the rules of the house reminds me of the Perry Mason series in which Hamilton Berger prosecuted in the courts of the United States. The hon. member for New Westminster may be able to do it in the courts of Vancouver and New Westminster, but he cannot come here and impose restrictions and coerce the members of this house, especially those in the opposition, the way he apparently does in the courts of the country.

I was very sorry to hear him speak the way he did. During the sittings of the legal affairs committee he quoted various people and books. He does not think much of Beauchesne, apparently. Beauchesne was here before him, and I suggest will be here long after the hon. member has gone. He spoke about the need of programming and all that goes with it. He spoke of the techniques of automation, of computers, and so on. He spoke of the necessity of changing the rules until parliament is productive, as he put it.