

to the hon. member for Welland (Mr. Railton) there are good reasons why the attitude of this place ought to be changed. What we have seen over the years is a gradual whittling away of the right of all members of this House to examine those estimates which represent the springboard of government policy.

This is the place in which we have the duty and ought to have the machinery and tools to examine the estimates. We do not. Not only must there be a fundamental change in the rules of this House, to which this party is committed, but there must be a fundamental change in the attitude of the government.

**An hon. Member:** Which way?

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** The hon. member asks me "which way". If he would close his mouth and open his ears I would tell him. The first thing which must happen in this place is that there must be returned to this place in the fullest sense the Committee of Supply so that in a very real way all of us as members of parliament will have an opportunity to examine the expenditures on a selective basis at the very least, of the various ministries which in a sense spend the public money. I do not wish any member of the House to take this as a suggestion that we return necessarily to the old system. But surely members of this House at the beginning of a year ought to have an opportunity to satisfy themselves concerning the government's spending. The estimates should be examined and the ministers and the deputy ministers, but particularly the ministers, should be subjected to the fullest possible scrutiny. If any members of this House do not understand this then they are not worthy to be here. Certainly that includes the hon. member for Welland.

The second matter is that dealt with by the hon. member for Scarborough East who made a contribution to the Committee on Procedure and Organization which I think is pretty sound. What he said, at a time when his own party is in power, is that the time has long since passed when members of this parliament ought to be able to examine in depth the estimates in respect of all the programs of the government. That is something that does not lie with us now.

● (2020)

We have the right to examine estimates in the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, but in fact because of the procedure of the standing committees dealing with estimates which allows for the guillotine to be applied to the consideration of estimates, members of this House have absolutely no right to examine the government's program. That right should be restored to this parliament. It is a right not just of the opposition but of every member of parliament.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** If the hon. member for Welland has dined so well that he does not care to listen, I would appreciate very much if he would at least stop making his interjections.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

### *Restraint of Government Expenditures*

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** The other thing that should happen in order to make the committee system work properly is for us to involve ourselves in the establishment of a panel of chairmen to bring about some known, visible, and apparent independence of chairmen of committees and to build up a certain continuity in the operations of committees. In some cases we should suspend the guillotine rule in standing committees or in any other committee which we establish.

I commend to members of the government the action that was taken in the province of Manitoba. I do not suggest that it is the last word but I suggest to hon. members that the NDP government in Manitoba demonstrated more foresight in its operations and in its approach to the rules of its House and the consideration of its government's estimates of expenditures than most members of this House, particularly those on the other side of the House. We should at least explore the possibility of allowing the committees of this House—the membership of which, after all, reflects the party representation in the House—some reasonable independence and, most of all, initiative in terms of investigation. Most of all, we should decry the absent-minded mouthing of nothings from the other side of the House when a member of parliament is making a speech on a serious matter.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** It is this attitude that caused the party opposite to receive the kick in the head it got last week in Quebec. The people there are sick and tired of arrogance.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** I see that I struck a chord.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I was trying to give the hon. member a chance to complete his remarks, but he has gone beyond his time and if he wants to continue he will need the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. Members:** No.

**Mr. John M. Reid (Kenora-Rainy River):** Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to say that I was quite taken by the remarks made by the House leader of the official opposition party on parliamentary reform. However welcome these remarks may be, I am sure he would be the first to admit that they are hardly the subject matter of our discussion which, as I understand it, is Bill C-19.

**Mr. Guay (St. Boniface):** He would not know the difference.

**Mr. Reid:** I want to point out to hon. members and to the House leader of the opposition that this is the eighth day we have been talking about Bill C-19. I do not want to go back to its history, but hon. members will remember that when the