

Government Orders

that Canadians can see this nation for the blessed advantage it really is.

The truth of the matter is that no one is more Canadian than at that moment when they arrived home from a trip elsewhere. When they come back to Canadian soil, when they have compared us with whatever else might be on earth, that becomes the point at which they say: "This is the land in which we have the greatest of opportunity".

We need to revisit not only the rules before us in this debate, but we need to expand beyond that to the whole question of individual relationships and conduct. We must treat each other with the kind of dignity that will come from orderly, parliamentary conduct. We need not enter into innuendo, into slanderous comments.

As an example, I think of a comment made by an hon. member some many years ago. He rose in this House and accused another hon. member of not having the morals of an alley cat. When Mr. Speaker asked him to withdraw his comments, he admitted that he was wrong and said: "Mr. Speaker, I withdraw. The hon. member does have the morals of an alley cat".

I use that example because it is of a period long before this present one, but the example can be found today. According to Erskine May, it is all inappropriate, you cannot do indirectly what you cannot do directly. As an institution we need to focus on those kinds of statements. We cannot allow members, in some slanderous way, to simply twist things and achieve points in a political debate when the fact of the matter is that we are here for one purpose and that is to serve the common good of all Canadians.

We are entering now into a very interesting period of time, a constitutional crisis of our nation upon which this institution is going to be looked at for its relevancy and its capacity to be able to resolve issues.

If we took the Canadians who think Question Period is a wonderful part of the parliamentary process, that it really reflects their views, that it is a positive period of legislative process, and put all those Canadians on Vancouver Island; and then we got those who thought it was a negative process, that it was disadvantageous to Parliament, and we put them on Prince Edward Island, the weight distribution of this country would so change

that the poor people on Vancouver Island would be 30,000 feet above sea level.

There is virtually no one who will stand up and say, I saw Question Period last week on television and I just wanted to report to you that I thought it was tremendous, it was a great display. None of us hear that when we go home. People do not come rushing up, but every one of us when we go home hear criticisms about the conduct here.

We, as a chamber, need to look at the rules again, about how we conduct ourselves in this House. That has to be an aspect that must tag along with all of the other rule changes that are coming at this very sensitive time, particularly as we enter into this constitutional crisis in which Canadians are asking whether or not we want to remain united, whether we want to remain a nation.

Frankly, I don't think Canadians are asking that question; they already have the answer. What they want to know is that this place will conduct itself in a manner where they can look towards it with respect and with the full and absolute belief that we are all here with the common interest of each of them in mind. We are not here to subrogate any one individual, to impute motives to another, to use long preambles that are argumentative when Erskine May says that they ought not to be, and to use our time in Question Period simply to embarrass the other person as a person. It is time we quit debating personalities and started debating issues. That means you stick to facts and to statistics. It is a drier and duller debate, but, sir, I can tell you this; it is a lot more profitable and advantageous for all Canadians when that is the way in which this institution conducts itself. I would commend it to every member of the House of Commons.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the remarks and comments of the hon. member for Crowfoot. He has been a member of this Parliament for a long time. I listened particularly to his comments about Canada and think they would be well received on all sides of the House.

I would ask him this. He is the chair of the committee on which I sit, the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs. I would like his comments on the impact of these rule changes on the work of the committees, as well as what is being left out, in terms of