

Business of the House

Mr. Browne (St. John's West): That seems to be an apt illustration of the question that was asked by the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe), I think it was last session, when he said: "If we want to do something, who is going to stop us?". The government have a majority and they are going ahead with the legislation. They are going to have the house hours of sitting as they see fit, when there is no particular occasion for such pressure at all. I have not heard yet from the government side of the house any special reason why we should have all this pressure at the present time. What is the reason for it? Is there any hurry for this particular legislation that is on the order paper, or any reason that it should be put through in any special hurry? What is the reason for it? Why does not some member of the government tell the members of this house and tell the public?

Mr. Stuart (Charlotte): They cannot get a chance.

Mr. Browne (St. John's West): I am quite sure the members of this house would welcome the remarks of any members of the government if they wish to speak this afternoon. I am quite sure they would be glad to hear from the hon. member who has just interrupted.

As I said at the beginning, I think the amendment is reasonable, and that we should not be expected to sit up here all night. If we do, we will all be wrecks in the morning. The only time people should be expected to sit up all night is when they are sitting up with a sick person or sitting up at a wake. But I do not think we want this house to look like a wake house, as it would look tomorrow morning. Hon. members on the other side of the house are smiling now, but I do not expect to see any smiles on their faces after they have been sitting up here all night.

Mr. Fraser: Three o'clock in the morning.

Mr. Browne (St. John's West): For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I support the amendment. I hope other hon. members will give the matter serious consideration and support it also.

Mr. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon): Mr. Speaker—

An hon. Member: Filibuster.

Mr. Dinsdale:—I have been listening with a great deal of interest to the discussion that has arisen suddenly out of today's proceedings. Not only have I been listening with interest to the arguments that are being presented in a more or less orthodox fashion by

the members of this house but also to the catcalls that are coming from behind the curtains and various places in this house.

Mr. Fraser: On the government side.

Mr. Dinsdale: Yes, on the government side.

An hon. Member: Today or yesterday?

Mr. Dinsdale: I think a rather significant fact is emerging out of this discussion. I might sum it up by saying that the discussion is indicative of the fact that the opposition is at last taking a formal stand in the chamber against tactics that we might call autocratic, which have been becoming all too obvious.

I remember reading an editorial back last May, I think it was, to the effect that all opposition in Canada had collapsed; and it went on to explain that the present government had developed the technique of moving so far to the right and so far to the left that it had pushed off the C.C.F. on the one side and the Progressive Conservatives on the other. Today, however, we find members of the official opposition taking a stand against this political expediency for the sake of holding power. It may be that the gesture that has been made in this chamber today is rather futile because, inevitably, amendments will be voted down by a government majority. Nonetheless there is a principle at stake here. I feel that, on this extremely important occasion, anything that can be said should be said to protect the rights of the minority groups in this house.

The attempt that is being made by members of the opposition to get a fair hearing for the legislation still remaining on the order paper will inevitably be voted down unless we can persuade certain members of the government to think differently and come to our support. While that may be a forlorn hope, there is always the possibility. While that gesture can be voted down in the house, it is not the first time this stand has been taken. My very presence in this chamber is the result of a stand we took along similar lines against autocratic tendencies. On that occasion we did not depend upon the verdict of a limited number in this chamber. We depended upon the verdict of the public, the citizens of Canada, and they responded to the challenge in the affirmative. I feel that if we could put this question facing us today to the broader public, we would get the same affirmative response.

We are faced with some extremely difficult pieces of legislation. As I pointed out in my remarks on this subject previously, as a new member of the house I was quite amazed that we were not proceeding to a discussion of the