

Summer Recess

We have heard very often about the need to refer matters to the courts. One of the great principles we have heard from the Conservative party is, "Let's go to court." We heard that week after week in the constitutional debate. They said it was the only institution we could trust with objectivity. They wanted to go to the courts because they were the only ones we could trust. What happens when we get to the uranium cartel and take the issue to court? They say, "Don't trust the courts." Well, they cannot have it both ways.

The same kind of gross political expediency has been displayed once again in their great act of statesmanship in the postal dispute. I read some of the statements of their once or future leader. He says, "We must broaden our base, appeal to the working people of this country, and respect the whole question of labour."

Here we have an industrial dispute, one that was carried out under the proper arrangements of the law of this land. They are a public service union. We may not like it, we may not in any way advocate their stand, but the union has the right to strike. But the first moment that it strikes, what is the call from the other side? Get them back to work!" The problem is that they did not even allow the proper due process of industrial bargaining and relations to even show what it was prepared to do. Instead, they stuck their big feet and big nose into it and prevented us from getting the kind of settlement that we needed when we could have got it. As a result they used Parliament as a battering ram to forge themselves and their own political objectives, and forgot about the public interest, which was to get that dispute resolved and settled. If there are people in this country who are responsible for holding up the resolution of the postal dispute, I am looking at them right now. Their erstwhile leader, who is so anxious to stay in Parliament, has not managed to stay around for the debate in the final moments of his glory. We are sorry he is not here to share in these final moments of quiet reflection about the past record.

● (2040)

It is a sad day for politics in this country when one man, for his own political expediency and his own political future, is allowed to disrupt the public interest of this nation. The hon. member for Portage-Marquette said that majorities must be careful about their privileges and powers. That is true, but equally so must minorities. There is no minority in this country which should be allowed to blackmail the rest of the country to serve its expedient political purposes.

Who in the House will ever forget the spectacle of Conservative members of Parliament yelling and screaming and shaking their fists in the centre of this chamber? They talk about respect for Parliament and respect for the rules. Who will ever forget how little respect was shown that night when they stormed the Chair, surrounded the Table, shook their fists, and yelled at the top of their lungs because they could not have their way? That is the party which does not respect Parliament.

Hon. members opposite showed that evening that their respect for Parliament goes only so far as their interests are served. It is difficult for us to accept their cries and pleas about respect for the propriety of Parliament when we see the flagrant and abusive way they are prepared to trample the rights of Parliament into the carpet in the centre of this chamber.

An hon. Member: Take another 20 minutes and we will all go home.

Mr. Axworthy: We are running out of time.

Some hon. Members: More!

Mr. Axworthy: It will continue only if I have the unanimous consent of the House.

There is no question that we are dealing with difficult and turbulent times. All the countries whose leaders are gathering here this weekend for a Summit are facing major problems of inflation and problems of trying to find responsible management of their economies. However, the one requirement in each of those cases is to make tough decisions. This government is prepared to do just that, but we are prepared to do it with a sense of compassion and understanding. We should not simply tighten the belt, and kill the patient while doing so, but that is what the previous government was prepared to do.

While hon. members opposite are whiling away their summer hours beside a lake listening to the loons, which I know the hon. member from Edmonton does a lot, I ask them to reflect on how often they have held up as an example the programs and policies of Margaret Thatcher. During the debate on the budget we were asked by them to look overseas at the example being shown to us by the government of the United Kingdom in the way it was cutting back, restraining, cutting back employment programs and cutting back job creation. They said that is the way to run a country. This last week we have seen what the price of that has been. Short-term gain for long-term pain has been the policy of that government, but we are not prepared to follow those false prophets into that kind of program. That would force this country into the same turbulence the United Kingdom is now facing. We are proud that we have tried to stand up against the false cries we heard from hon. members opposite in the budget debate.

We have tough decisions to make. We recognize that those tough decisions will at times result in cries of alarm. They will result in emotional outcries, and create deep divisions with respect to approach, but we are prepared to make them.

I would like to close by saying to hon. members opposite that we now have a time in which all of us can do some reflecting. I hope when we come back for the next session of Parliament hon. members will show the spirit of co-operation, dedication and willingness to make tough decisions that this government has shown in this session of Parliament.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!