

Supply

I think Parliament has become a better place because of the MacEachens and the Baldwins and the Douglasses and our very much missed friend, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). When we survey the history of Parliament over these past 14 years, I think we will credit these men and many others with advancing the cause of parliamentary democracy. The qualities they brought to Parliament, which have, in turn, nurtured Parliament, stem from a single belief in the sovereignty of the people as it is exercised through Parliament. Even in the most difficult moments they never lost sight of the fact that neither partisanship nor opportunism is sufficient justification for challenging the very sovereignty of the institution of Parliament.

Members of all parties over the years have understood that there are limits beyond which they can go only at peril to Parliament itself. I am sorry to say that I believe these limits have been exceeded in the last two weeks by the Conservative Party.

Mr. Greenaway: You guys too.

Mr. MacGuigan: While what I can only call the travesty of the Conservative behaviour was bad enough, what in a sense is even worse is the attempt now by the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) to endow their anti-democratic behaviour with a gloss of concern for Parliament. No one mindful of the history and traditions of this institution could close the doors of the House in the name of reform. This conduct speaks not of a party or group committed to parliamentary reform but of a party that is so thoroughly committed to power at any cost that it would force Parliament to cease functioning.

Have they not read history? Do they not know that our political ancestors fought kings to keep this institution functioning? Do they not know that our privileged tradition of democracy has been based on the notion that Parliament is the ultimate forum for discussion and debate? Do they not know that they have set an insidious precedent which brings no credit to them, and none to the institution?

Parliament offers ample opportunity for all sides to be heard, and even to be heard at some length. Filibustering, political manoeuvring and just plain politics have all been used by the opposition.

Mr. Taylor: And by you.

Mr. MacGuigan: And by us, I admit, when we have been in the opposition, and by the government, yes, when it feels keenly about issues. But in all cases parties have kept the House going in the search for solutions. Now my hon. friends opposite have established the precedent that an unruly opposition has the right to muzzle the very institution they were elected to support and to close down the debate on the nation's business which they were elected to discuss. Where are the democrats in the Conservative Party and their great tradition?

If they are on the opposition benches today—and I am prepared to concede that the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) is very likely one of those—they must indeed be anguished by the events of the last two weeks.

Mr. Taylor: Why didn't you split the bill?

Mr. MacGuigan: They cannot be proud of muzzling Parliament and of creating a new and dangerous precedent which could be used by others again to thwart the will of the Canadian people.

Mr. Taylor: Why did it take you so long to split the bill?

Mr. MacGuigan: Surely what faith they had in their leader must by now have completely evaporated, because I find it hard to believe that the heirs of Macdonald, Cartier and Borden would gleefully and carelessly participate in such tactics.

Mr. Nowlan: What did you hear about the naval bill?

Mr. MacGuigan: The last two weeks cannot be conveniently explained away on the ground of concern for Parliament. It is like arguing that one should deliberately crash an aeroplane in order to advance transport safety.

We have learned much about the Leader of the Opposition and his House leader in the last fortnight. We never experienced events like this during the tenure of the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton. We have learned that the right hon. gentleman is prepared to sabotage the very institution he professes to love so much, if it will serve his immediate personal ambitions, ambitions which many of those seated closely around him seem very eager to truncate. We have learned that if respect for Parliament is not enough to give the right hon. gentleman second thoughts before he corrupts parliamentary traditions, then neither did respect for the Canadian public restrain the right hon. member in his public pronouncements.

Mr. Taylor: Get rid of your dictator, and it wouldn't happen.

Mr. MacGuigan: I have here a comment by Michael Valpy of *The Globe and Mail*, in which I believe he spoke for many Canadians. He wrote:

The purpose behind—

The recent parliamentary impasse.

—has acquired more shadow with each increasingly dishonest and dangerous statement from Joe Clark—about Tories being barons confronting King John; about the omnibus bill being one more attempt by Mr. Trudeau to fundamentally change the structure of Canadian society and government.

Does the man really have to go across the country milking hate and discord on, for heaven's sake, a Parliamentary issue, pandering to the basest and most unthinking political discontent in the country? Is that what has happened to the Conservative Party?

Mr. Nowlan: This is sick of you, Mark.

Mr. MacGuigan: I do not know the answer to this rhetorical question.

Mr. Taylor: Tell us about Forsey.