

Procedure and Organization

Breton-East Richmond (Mr. MacInnis)! I can be just as vicious. Let me read my letter because this is very encouraging to government members also. The letter is dated July 2, 1969.

An hon. Member: Pretty good postal service!

Mr. Alexander: That is what I call stupidity! The member does not know when the letter was sent or when I received it, and yet he is saying, pretty good postal service. That is the attitude of a member of the government. With all due respect, Mr. Speaker, I shall now be like the hon. member for Cape Breton-East Richmond and say they are stupid. I will now read the letter which I received from Mr. Donald J. Allan. It is dated July 2, 1969:

Dear Mr. Alexander:

I am writing you on a matter of grave concern to all Canadians. The governments bill to set the time limit of debate at all stages through parliament. The government is already equipped with the rule of closure should it want to limit debate, and this is enough power in the hands of any body of legislators. Should the government be given more powers, the day may come when an inept or corrupt government could rule the country in any way they desired.

This is the most important part of this letter. When he refers to me, he is also talking to the leader of the Opposition, the leader of the New Democratic Party and the leader of the Cr ditiste party:

Mr. Alexander, I beg of you, continue opposition to this bill. Fight it with every means at your disposal before the very means themselves are legislated out of existence.

I do not know this person who wrote this letter. Hon. members know I am a man of integrity. They can accept my word for this. I do not know who wrote it, but there are countless other letters like that. We must be concerned now. There is a principle involved. The principle involved is the accepted role of the opposition. Is such a principle valid in a democratic system? Is the accepted role of the opposition valid? The answer unqualifiedly is, yes. The word "democracy" supports the role of the opposition and precludes any other conclusion. Oh, but we have the draftsmen of the just society. I remember that in my maiden speech I said that was a slogan without definition. Yet the draftsmen of the just society and the draftsmen of the other slogan, participatory democracy, would disagree with what I just said. Because of the alleged mandate handed to them last June 25 they have interpreted the new politics of the

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Prime Minister as meaning there is no role at all for the opposition or, at the most, an insignificant role, whether it be the loyal opposition, the N.D.P. or the Cr ditistes.

• (8:40 p.m.)

You know, Mr. Speaker, I think many people across this nation, and all of us on this side, have come to the conclusion that this government is drunk with power and is hung up on this mandate about which they continually talk. I never heard so much talk, until I came here, about the great mandate they received. It is as if this were the end of everything. Do you know what the mandate means to them? To hon. members on the other side, with a few exceptions,—I must be fair in that regard—mandate means the granting of an unrestricted licence to do anything to anybody, regardless of the consequences, solely for the ultimate purpose and benefit of the Liberal party.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Alexander: I am becoming sick and tired of hearing hon. members throw across the chamber in a taunting way the reminder that they have a mandate. They are just like a bunch of babies. They seem to suggest they are the masters of the house.

Let me tell you this, Mr. Speaker. We are not frustrated because of their mandate. We do not cringe in fear because of their mandate. We are not weak because of their mandate. We shall not be bullied because of their mandate and we shall not be harrassed because of it. We shall not accept rule 75c because of their mandate.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Alexander: Why do I say this? There is a relatively simple approach to this matter. We on this side of the house also received a mandate. We, too, in the loyal opposition received a mandate. Do you know what our mandate was? It was a mandate to criticize constructively; it was a mandate to probe government action; it was a mandate to be responsible.

Mr. Stanfield: A mandate to keep them honest.

Mr. Alexander: It was a mandate to be the defender of the rights of people. It was a mandate which implied a future role as the government of this great country, and do not sell that last one short.