

Supply

Hon. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, 10 per cent of the Hon. Member's speech was devoted to the issues and during the other 90 per cent he attacked personally the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Nielsen), but during that 10 per cent of his speech he mentioned that the reason we do not discuss foreign policy very often here seems to be the fault of the Opposition. I am sure he is aware that we could discuss it any time that the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacEachen), or the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), chose to make a statement on motions on any of the international conferences they attend. However, they prefer to make them, as the Hon. Member knows, at press conferences. I wonder if the Hon. Member could tell us the last time that the Government side made a statement on motions on anything to do with external affairs?

Mr. Simmons: Mr. Speaker, in answer to the specific last question, I do not think they have made one for a long time, and I will go further and say that they would be crazy if they tried to make one under the present circumstances in the House. You cannot make statements by Ministers with the bells ringing and when we have some Government business we have to get through. We have very little Government time in which to get it through.

The Hon. Member for St. John's East made a suggestion this morning which is worthy of note and will be taken under advisement, which is whether we should be making statements at six o'clock or at eight o'clock. The crux of the issue is not whether the Government wants to make statements, I say, but whether the Government can find a way to do so without eating too heavily into Government time which is so badly needed to expedite Government business in this Chamber.

With respect to the Hon. Member's earlier comment, Mr. Speaker, as to how much of my time was spent on the issues and how much time was not, I say to him that I scarcely see how he could hear what I was saying in any event because he was being harassed from behind by his friend, the Hon. Member for Bow River. How he could hear anything I said I am at a loss to understand. Obviously, he has good ears and he has the earpiece in his ear, and it makes all the difference, and I thank him for listening to me.

Hon. Walter Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I awakened this morning with the resolution in my heart that I would say or do nothing partisan this week.

Mr. Johnston: That's a precedent.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): The Minister of State for Economic Development (Mr. Johnston) says that that is a precedent. He may be right or wrong with that resolution. I would like to start off by congratulating the Hon. Member for Burin-St. George's (Mr. Simmons) on the very high quality of his speech. In fact, it is of a higher quality than we usually hear from the Hon. Member for Burin-St. George's and for that I believe the House should be extremely grateful. I know they were thrilled in the gallery with the speech he made. In fact, I understand they left before I got up and as he was

sitting down. I did not want to be partisan and that is not my intention. I want the Hon. Member to know that I as well accept kindly and warmly his expressions of goodwill toward the present Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Nielsen) in the House of Commons. I am sure that, although the Chamber is awash with his crocodile tears worrying about the Leader of the Opposition, all of it will be taken in the best of heart, and that the Leader of the Opposition has his own way of expressing his grateful thanks for such warm words as he is about to depart. I am certain that the Hon. Member for Burin-St. George's will be sending the Leader of the Opposition an autographed copy of his speech which the Leader of the Opposition can hang up in the place where he usually keeps these memorials and testimonials to the work he has done in the period of time he has been Leader of the Opposition.

As a matter of fact, I believe, we are going to have an evening for the Leader of the Opposition within the next day or so. I feel it might be a good idea to read the speech of my friend during that evening, which will indicate to the Leader of the Opposition just how effective he has been in this interim period, and I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition for the work he has done in this Parliament in a very difficult situation, and in dealing with a very difficult Government.

I wanted to begin my remarks in that ecumenical sense with respect to my friend, the Hon. Member for Burin-St. George's. I want to say to the people of Burin-St. George's that he is not always like this.

Mr. McKinnon: He is asleep part of the time.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Yes, perhaps he is not that way when he is asleep, but I see him under other circumstances. I just want to say that he is not always of such a high quality. In fact, there are occasions when he is of much higher quality in terms of his contribution to the Parliament of Canada.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): When?

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Well, I share with him a membership on the Special Committee on Standing Orders and Procedure, and I must say that he has made a good contribution. And it was because of the contributions he has made on these occasions, away from the spotlight, away from the television cameras, and away from the Press Gallery, very constructive contributions, that I became a little concerned about my friend from Burin-St. George's as I listened to him today. I felt only that he had been overcome by the atmosphere in this House of Commons today and by the people who were here to listen to him, those who did not leave. I sat through it all and that is why I am prepared to say, Mr. Speaker, and prepared to attest anywhere, that his speech today is of higher quality than he has delivered on other occasions in the House of Commons, and he is to be congratulated. We have sat together on committee, and I want to talk about that committee because, frankly, it was one of the most rewarding experiences I have had since I came to Parliament, bar none. I