

Summer Recess

was created, and it is not under that system that Parliament can thrive.

If the President of the Privy Council is serious about reforming this institution to make it an institution in which individual members of Parliament can in fact influence the public policy of the day effectively and freely, then we on this side of the House will support any sensible measure which he introduces to accomplish that, and we will propose several to him ourselves.

Let me get to matters where there might be less agreement. I heard the minister talk about the need for members of Parliament to get into their constituencies and to talk to their constituents.

[Translation]

I must say that I am certain that if some of the members from Quebec had been able to visit their constituents, especially when we were debating the constitutional issue, the result would be very different and the contribution of these members to our debates would have been very different. Because one thing is quite clear, and that is that the views of Quebec citizens on the constitutional issue do differ from those expressed by Quebec members during the long constitutional debate.

Someone mentioned Lévis. The Progressive Conservative Party obtained 4 per cent of the vote in Lévis in 1980. We obtained 31 per cent of the vote in a byelection because we spoke up for Quebecers on the constitutional issue. This is why our candidate was so successful, and I believe that it shows to Quebecers, and especially to the members of the Liberal party, that they have the duty to take the views of their voters into account in the future when we deal with such basic issues as constitutional reform.

[English]

I wish them well on their voyages home. If they need any arguments or if they need any help in understanding the point of view of Quebecers on the constitutional question, they can write me and I will send them some of my speeches.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: Let me come to the question of the order we are debating now, the motion for adjournment. The President of the Privy Council jokes and says he will mail me a letter. Unfortunately, that is one of the problems with this House in dealing with this question, because it is possible for members of this House of Commons to have our communications sent by messenger, or perhaps by courier, to people who need them. It is not possible, when the postal service is on strike, for ordinary Canadians to have their mail delivered when they need it because ordinary Canadians do not have the privileges members of this House of Commons have. My party and I say

that we do not propose to exercise our privilege of rising for the summer while individual Canadians across the country face the prospect of being denied their privilege and their right to have their mail delivered by their postal service.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: Let me come back to some of the remarks of the President of the Privy Council. He admitted that Parliament has the power to come back here and resolve problems—including problems of a work stoppage—and to introduce back to work legislation, so the question of the right to strike is not at issue here at all. Most of us in this House who have been here for any length of time have had to vote to have Parliament impose upon various work forces in the public service the necessity to get back to work and carry on their functions. That was done without any limitation of the right to strike.

That is an unhappy part of the life and the responsibilities of the parliamentary system, but that is not the question here at all. The question here was alluded to, perhaps inadvertently, by the President of the Privy Council. He talked about the inconvenience caused to members of Parliament. He talked about the inconvenience caused to members of the press. He talked about the inconvenience caused to others who might have to stay here to make sure Parliament is able to do its duty. What concerns me and my party is the inconvenience to hundreds of thousands of Canadians who have a right to count upon their mail. They look to us to put their convenience ahead of our convenience, and that is what my party and I intend to do.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: He speaks about the rights of public servants, and I certainly accept that. But I also accept that citizens have rights in this country, and if there is one body in the land which has a duty to respect and protect the rights of the citizens of Canada, it is this Parliament of Canada. I do not propose to have this Parliament of Canada getting up and going away when, by staying, it could positively influence the restoration of mail services in the country.

The President of the Privy Council used the words "the public interest". He said that the government can decide to call Parliament back when the public interest is at stake. We happen to believe that the public interest is at stake now in the question relating to mail service in the country. He has said that if we want to have a real test of the public interest, we can perhaps have an election. We are ready for that too; however, I suggest to him that the people of Canada are not particularly interested in elections, but the people of Canada are very much interested in having their mail delivered. The people of Canada are very much interested in having an energy agreement. The people of Canada are very much interested in having a government which will act on the problems which are real and important to ordinary people across the country. That is what this government has failed to do, and it proposes to continue to