

Procedure and Organization

We have had a report on veterans for which we waited over five years. The government has been sitting on it now for over a year. It was only after a great deal of probing that it was sent to a standing committee, and we are now waiting for a white paper.

We have been waiting for a year for a white paper on the Carter commission report. We have been waiting for some action on old age pensions to compensate the old people for the effect of the rise in the cost of living. It has been increasing at a rate of 4 per cent per year but the old age pensioners cost of living bonus is set at only 2 per cent per year.

Members on this side of the house have been pointing out to the government that the farmers in western Canada are facing bankruptcy. Day after day and month after month we have been pressing the government for some action, for some statement of policy, but nothing has been forthcoming. If anyone thinks this is exaggeration let me refer them to a statement in the *Ottawa Citizen* on June 25 in an article by Charles King, which he wrote at a place called St. Jean, Manitoba. The article was headed "Peter Trudeau's The Ogre in St. Gene". This is what he said:

Because the feeling is deep and genuine, Trudeau is broadly considered to be the greatest disaster that has hit the west since the great drought of the thirties, if it doesn't go back to the Riel rebellion.

The article goes on to state:

It's a bit late now, Peter Trudeau, but you should come out here and check the situation for yourself.

I certainly hope the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) will do that, but if he does not react any more effectively to what he will face in the west than he has in the last eight months I fear the farmers of western Canada will get no relief. To suggest that 75c is needed in order that parliament can respond quickly to an emergency situation is a farce. This government's response to the social and economic needs of the country has been continual reviews, the appointment of task forces and the setting up of commissions. It has done absolutely nothing about the major problems facing the country which are causing such widespread dismay and disaffection.

There is only one reason we have 75c before us. The government is contemptuous of parliament and is going to use its majority to muzzle dissent in the name of efficiency. The Prime Minister's statement last year in the house when he said, "We are the masters of the house", is now taking tangible form in

[Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands).]

an amendment to the rules. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has never been able to conceal his complete disregard and contempt for parliament. He has never been able to make up his mind whether he wants to be a reincarnation of Joan of Arc or Louis XIV. "L'état, c'est moi" has become the attitude of the Prime Minister in respect of parliament. He has shown contempt for parliament first of all by blocking the report of the committee on transportation, then by attempting to block the discussion of the report now before us through the motion introduced by the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald). He is now seeking to reduce debate on any measure to a minimum of four days, and where a bill is sent to a standing committee, to only three days in the house.

The President of the Privy Council, in his address to the house, suggested we should remember that this will only be done after consultation. I laughed and he rebuked me for laughing. I apologize for that burst of laughter, but I want to point out that such laughter was almost inevitable. Consultation with the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) is not an easy thing in any case because he has the diplomatic finesse of a piledriver. But just imagine negotiating with the President of the Privy Council when he has a meat axe in one hand and rule 75c in the other. It would be like going to a poker game to play against a fellow who had a loaded gun pointed at your head.

● (4:10 p.m.)

Mr. Hees: And a loaded deck as well.

An hon. Member: And an olive branch in the other hand.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): This contempt for parliament and for parliamentary tradition always seems to assail the Liberal party whenever it gets into office with a large majority. It is true that power sometimes corrupts but absolute power corrupts absolutely. Many of us remember the statement made in 1956 by the Right Hon. C. D. Howe, who was a great Canadian. Few men made a greater contribution to Canada's war effort than Mr. Howe. But long years of power brought him to the point at which in 1956 he said, "Who is going to stop us" and "what is a million bucks?". The pipeline bill was pushed through parliament by closure before members could open their mouths and it was applied on every clause of the bill. But a day of reckoning came. The people of Canada are patient and slow to anger but when