

Summer Recess

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, I can anticipate the hon. member's point of order, and I am prepared to hear him.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please. With respect to the comment of the right hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) that he can anticipate the point of order, so can I, but it is the right of the hon. member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) to put his point of order.

Mr. Benjamin: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, what I want the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) to do is to expand upon the business of task forces reporting to ministers and governments only. He could also explain about the task force of the hon. member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Neil) last year.

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, I correctly anticipated and I am interested to note that the hon. member for Regina West is continuing to try to put obstacles in the path of efforts taken by my government to increase rail line service and grain transportation movement in the prairies of Canada. That was a major initiative taken by our government. It was an initiative that was opposed throughout by the hon. member. I am pleased to see that he continues to take his position against the interests of the grain producers of western Canada on his last day in the House this session.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please. The hon. member for Regina West on a point of order. May I indicate to the hon. member that he, or any other member of the House, has the right to call upon the Chair to recognize a point of order. In courtesy to whatever member may be speaking, however, and in the present case it is the right hon. Leader of the Opposition, one hopes it is a point of order and not a point of debate.

Mr. Benjamin: That is true, Mr. Speaker, but the hon. Leader of the Opposition has just distorted the entire position of the party of which I am a member, as well as my own position.

An hon. Member: That is not a point of order.

Mr. Benjamin: Our position was—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please. The hon. member for Regina West sought the floor on a point of debate, not a point of order. I specifically requested that if there is to be a point of order it ought to be just that—a point of order. That was not a point of order.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition quoted me as saying that I continued to oppose the position of the prairie grain producers. I said no such thing at any time.

An hon. Member: Get up and debate it.

Mr. Benjamin: The hon. Leader of the Opposition is totally out of order. He is not telling the truth.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Benjamin: The Leader of the Opposition only has to reply to the point of order that I originally raised about task forces that report to ministers only, which is exactly what he had last year.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please. I say again that the hon. member for Regina West is entering into debate. I would ask him to be so kind as to co-operate with the usual procedure of the House and permit the right hon. Leader of the Opposition to continue.

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, I was not distorting the position of the hon. member. I was simply reviewing it and recalling it to his mind. I am not at all surprised that he is unhappy when that is done. He would also be unhappy were I to recall to his mind the positions, in the plural, of his party on NATO, the positions, in the plural, of his party on NORAD, and the positions, in the plural, and the contradiction of his party on the Quebec referendum. We could do that, but I do not intend to spend very much time reminding the New Democratic Party of the inconsistencies that have become a way of life with them.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: What I wanted to deal with instead was some of the records of the government and indeed, in my opening remarks, some of the matters that were prepared and ready to be introduced by the government I had the honour to lead. For some peculiar reason those things have disappeared and have not made their way to the legislative agenda of this House. I think, for example, of the beef import law which was ready for introduction last year and of which nothing has been seen. In light of the references of the President of the Privy Council to his interest in parliamentary reform, I think of the very comprehensive package of parliamentary reforms that had as a purpose not the convenience of the government but the powers, the rights and the respect of individual members of Parliament. That package was introduced by our government, but nothing has been seen of it.

I think, for example, of the proposal we made to have an open, public inquiry, into all aspects of nuclear energy in this country, instead of a silent, quiet, private, hidden inquiry by officials of the Government of Canada who have the most to hide. We believed in openness. We acted on openness, and they have acted in the exact opposite direction. Or we could have spoken about the committee on voluntarism designed to try to have the Parliament of Canada recognize the great damage that is being done to the spirit of Canadians by the growth of bureaucracy, both public and private, to have the Parliament of Canada address directly the problems and the potential of encouraging more individuals through voluntary organizations to play a larger role themselves in the development and in the improvement of our Canadian society. That was a parliamentary special committee proposed by the government of which I had the honour to be leader, a parliamentary committee on a