

*Government Orders*

**Hon. Roger Simmons (Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I too want to make a few comments on this bill. I have spent some time in opposition myself, both here in this Chamber and in the Newfoundland House of Assembly, and I see that the members of the opposition have recognized this bill for what it is, in part, and that is an opportunity for the opposition to have some fun with a number of issues.

**Mr. Cummins:** It is serious business.

**Mr. Simmons:** I will talk about the serious business of this bill, but first, why should my hon. friend from Delta deny me some of the fun?

I notice my hon. friend from Cariboo—Chilcotin trotted out his tractor anecdote once again today. I missed part of it so I do not know what colour the tractor was today. Was it green or blue like the last time? I say to him that some time he should tell us about the cow that having given the full pail of milk, good wholesome milk, was manoeuvred into kicking over the pail. I am not suggesting of course that my friend from Cariboo—Chilcotin or his colleagues are a bunch of cows. They are not that at all. Some could accuse them of being the people trying to manoeuvre the productive cow into wasting something that has been produced.

• (1715)

I digress. I say to my friend from Lotbinière that I notice that patronage is getting a fairly full workout here this afternoon, and so it should. Patronage has always been with us and always will be, and so it should.

Mr. Speaker, I say through you to my friend from Calgary North, hear it in context. I said patronage has always been with us, always will be, and so it should. Before she gets too disbelieving I invite her to hear it in context. I was about to say that members of this Chamber practise patronage in your families on a regular basis, in your church and your community organizations. You regularly reach out to those people you know or can trust. That is not to imply that all the people you do not know you cannot trust. It is just that you do not know whether you can trust them because you have not yet met them.

What is so surprising if in that church group, community group, that municipal council or whatever the group may be, you reach out to somebody whose credentials you know, whose people skills you know when you want a job done. I repeat, that is not to suggest that all the people you do not know in this world are not to be trusted.

It is no accident that if a Liberal government is in power a number of the appointments will be people who are known Liberals. It would be no accident that if a Reform government were in power some of the appointments would be Reform appointments. The law of averages alone takes care of that. If we had to exclude all the people who either voted Liberal or were

active in the Liberal cause over the years, we would virtually exclude the entire population of Canada.

Is anybody suggesting that the label itself ought to be a disincentive? There is more to it than that. Let me construct an example for members. If I am an employer and have an opening and there are two applicants for a particular position, both of whom have equal credentials, equal qualifications, equal experience and I know one and I do not know the other, I am going to hire the one I know. The principle stands that the devil you know is better than the devil you do not know, to put it in the vernacular. More generically, the person you know is better than the person you do not know. By definition if you do not know the second person there may be something about that second person, which despite the paper qualifications, despite the experience, has something less to commend him or her to the job. In its purest form that is patronage.

I believe what my friends are talking about is something different altogether. They may not have the courage to put the term on it. I think what they are talking about is corrupt patronage.

I return to my example. If the employer have two people in front of me applying for a position. The person I know does not know a row of beans about the job. The second person, whom I do not know, has good credentials, commends himself or herself to the job in every way, comes through well in the interview. Despite all that I hire the person I know. That is the beginning of corrupt patronage. That is the tail wagging the dog. That is the employer in the example using something other than his head. That example itself may not be corrupt but it is certainly stupid to rush out and hire the person because you know him rather than the person who can do the job. However, that is the beginning of corrupt patronage.

• (1720)

Governments over the years, Tory governments, have practised some corrupt patronage and Liberals have practised corrupt patronage but that does not make it right. I submit that we cannot go back and undo the elections of many years past with the people who sat in Liberal cabinets or Liberal governments or headed Liberal governments and Tory governments over the years. I mention those two parties because they are the only two strains we have had at the federal level. I could go to the provincial level and talk about governments of other stripes, including Social Credit and NDP. We all know the range of governments we have had in Canada heading provincial and federal administrations. There was the Union Nationale in the province of Quebec and other governments. We cannot go back and rerun those elections.

Therefore I submit that the only credentials we can examine now are the credentials of the present administration which is the administration which will be accountable in the next election. Before we are all tarred with the same brush, hear some of