

Business of the House

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jamieson: This gentleman says—my apology.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

• (3:30 p.m.)

Mr. Jamieson: Perhaps the wish was father to the thought. On the points that he made, may I say very briefly that it is, of course the wish of all of us that it could have been possible for us to achieve the kind of unanimity that would have produced not only a bill with which we could all agree but, most important, a bill that could be introduced and enacted quickly, thus putting an end to the indecision. This was not possible for the House leader to do, and I think it is a terribly important point. Incidentally, it has been said that we have dealt with only 191 pages of the bill. I say to the right hon. gentleman with all due deference, and I do not mean it unkindly, that this is something of a representation in that the most of the key points in the bill are in those 191 pages.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Nonsense!

Mr. Jamieson: Let us assume that the rate of progress that has been made was adequate.

Mr. Forrestall: What are the 500 pages left for?

Mr. Jamieson: I will tell you what they are for, to hold up this bill for another nine months—nine months of indecision.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Jamieson: If it took this House three months to study 191 pages, it is surely logical to assume that, given the snail's pace of progress on some of these matters, we would be here for another nine months, and that is too long to wait in indecision in this country on such an important measure.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nowlan: Joey Smallwood knows how to hold things up.

Mr. Speaker: I am not sure who has the floor. I ask hon. members to give the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) a chance to complete his remarks. He has just about one minute left.

Mr. Jamieson: I may say that it would be folly for the hon. member for Annapolis Valley (Mr. Nowlan) to request any foghorns in his riding in the future because I know he will not need them.

However, in the moment remaining, may I remind the House very briefly of the exhaustive study that these measures have had from the very first day on which the right hon. gentleman appointed the Carter Commission. It is true that we could go on indefinitely on many of these matters because surely it would not be possible, on a

[Mr. Jamieson.]

measure of this magnitude and complexity, to ever expect that this House would be unanimous on the total bill. At some point there would have to be disagreement. All we are asking is that the House use the normal amount of time which we think is adequate to the job.

May I remind hon. members in passing that the house of commons of the United Kingdom took six days of debate to decide on entry into the European Common Market.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jamieson: I will not try to argue the point, but let me say finally that while we have responsibilities to the opposition which, quite properly, they never let us forget, I suggest that the opposition has the responsibility to the government to let it bring its program forward and to enact it into law. Finally, of course, we both have a responsibility to the people of Canada. We are satisfied to take the reaction that will result from this procedure because we are satisfied that what the people of Canada are really saying to us is to get on with the job, and that is what we are trying to do.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Today, we seem to have proof as to who is expert in the House on extraneous matters. In ten minutes, the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) hardly referred to the motion or the issue before the House. It would appear that he got lost in the rabbit tracks to which he referred in reply to the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker). He did mention Machiavelli. I can think of no one more qualified in this House to speak about Machiavelli because the minister learned about Machiavelli from an expert, the premier of Newfoundland. The Minister of Transport would do well to direct his efforts and his attention to the mess in Newfoundland today resulting from the intransigence of the Liberal party in refusing to listen to the wishes of the people of Newfoundland.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McGrath: That is Liberal democracy for you, Mr. Speaker. Here is a party that was defeated by the people of Newfoundland and yet refuses to resign. We will have another opportunity to meet the minister on this question. We will be seeing him in Sally's Cove.

The minister spoke about closure; he spoke about the opposition's objections to this device, this guillotine on the part of the government. Indeed, the right hon. member for Prince Albert referred to the fact that, now that the device has been used, rule 75c itself was born of closure. Why was it that the government had to use closure to bring in Rule 75c? They had to use closure because 75c was a repugnant to us then as it is now. Here we have the same government that imposed closure on the House to change the rules of the House just a few years ago now taking the unprecedented step of imposing closure on a tax bill. I doubt that there is a precedent anywhere in the annals of British parliamentary history. All I can say is that the arrogance of this government is only exceeded by the contempt it has for this institution.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!