

Government Orders

We know many Canadians rely on television for their news. If they had to rely on that particular news story, they would have a very distorted view of what in fact is happening. Apart from the errors and lack of facts, there was a cynical and partisan tone. It simply reported and accepted the partisan response of opposition. No wonder the people are cynical.

Even on a non-partisan issue like this, only the base politics came through. We saw only the accusation that this was Fascist, stifling and Draconian. These kinds of shrill, loud adjectives when used bring us all into disrepute. It is something that you are going to see various members of the New Democratic Party objecting to; my condemnation of the use of those words. I want to ask them to reflect sincerely. If they believe that public debate helps and that their reputations as parliamentarians help when they go on television or in public for various reasons, do they really think using words like Fascist and Draconian brings respect on themselves or this institution? Is it helping to bind this wounded country together, to generate jobs for people, or helping anybody in any way? I want to ask them to reflect on that sincerely before they so glibly defend that kind of thing.

We live in an adversarial system. The government proposes and Parliament disposes. There is the give and take, but taken to extremes and under the glare of television I wonder what we would do. It was Bismarck in the last century who said: "There are two things people should not watch being made, one is sausages and the other is laws." Well, like it or not, modern communication has the people watching laws being made. If we do not want to make them all sick to death of our democratic institutions we should bear that in mind as we perform in this Chamber and look at these things.

Mr. Riis: Harvey, you are turning us into a sausage factory.

Mr. Andre: There is my friend from Kamloops who participated in these discussions more intensely over the last couple of months, but was aware of them going back a year. He never once in private said to me that these are Draconian, Fascistic and would stomp on Parliament. Never once in our discussions did he use any such

language. Sure, he did not like every clause, I acknowledge that, but he has to acknowledge that we made some changes to reflect—

Mr. Riis: Name one that we suggested. Name one that the NDP suggested.

Mr. Andre: We will name several, as a matter of fact, that were changed in reflection of the changes suggested. He knows that the day before his public utterances there was a three hour meeting in the office of my colleague, the parliamentary secretary. He knows that substantial changes were made then. He knows what he said privately at that time. He then walked out of that private meeting and said: "This is Fascistic, this is Draconian." Then, when my parliamentary secretary said: "Well, you know that in view of your statements we can no longer agree to those changes." He said: "I understand that." That is the root of the problem. You participate in good faith in negotiations and discussions and then at the opportunity for partisan advantage, for a shot on television, you have got to make sure you use the noisiest adjectives you can: "Draconian", "Fascistic", "stomping on Parliament". All the things that will get you on national television. You then sit down and say: "Is it not sad that we are brought into such disrepute as politicians."

Mr. Riis: It is not politicians, it is the Tories who are in disrepute.

Mr. Andre: Right. The editorial in today's *Ottawa Citizen* is I think instructive to the hon. member for Kamloops and to everybody else. I will just read a part of it:

The juvenile antics and partisan performances of our elected politicians in the House of Commons sometimes make it very difficult for Canadians to care much about what goes on there.

Amen.

And as our political leaders lose credibility they're diverting attention away from the seat of democracy by relying on commissions of appointed officials to address the woes of the nation that should be addressed right here, in Ottawa, on the Hill.

In short, our elected leaders are making Parliament irrelevant.

Thus it is difficult to understand all the opposition politicians' complaints and moans about the Commons rules changes recently introduced by Government House Leader Harvie Andre.