

Petition forms have been sent to all Canadian university campuses and signatures can be mailed to the University of Ottawa Students Council,—

An hon. Member: They are outside right now.

Mr. Forrestall: And these are the students we were accused of bribing to do this.

● (9:50 p.m.)

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, I should like to give a bit of advice to hon. members on the other side of the chamber. I know they cannot always be in the house to listen to debate, and probably do not have time to read all of *Hansard*. However, they would be well advised to read *Hansard* of July 18 and the remarks of the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie). The hon. member for Hillsborough is not considered to be a partisan member of parliament; in fact, he is one of the more amiable, easy to get along with members of the house. His contribution to the debate that day was profound. In order to give hon. members an idea of the kind of logic he was using I shall quote two paragraphs from the hon. member's speech. He said:

This debate is more than a discussion of the rules. It is not just a narrow discussion of a law, a regulation or a rule, but of the spirit behind it. This is what we are reflecting upon in this debate. There is more involved than the mere words of rule 75A, 75B and 75C. I think it is the essence of representative government that we are evaluating and appreciating at this time.

How very true! The hon. member went on to say:

What we, the people's representatives, are dealing with today could mark a great watershed between a parliament which, with all its imperfections, was and is a meaningful instrument of democratic action and something that is much less valuable, much less significant and much less expressive of the popular will. As I say, we are dealing today not with the routine, but rather with the essence of parliament.

What is the fundamental difference between a democracy and a dictatorship? It is the position parliament holds in the governmental process of a democratic country that keeps a country free. Democracy has preserved our way of life and made this country strong. The basic fact behind democracy is that parliament is supreme and that the executive arm, the government, must always be subservient to parliament. That is a fundamental concept of democracy. It is what Magna Carta was all about. I ask the Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier) to take note of this.

Procedure and Organization

An hon. Member: He does not understand.

Mr. Thompson: In a dictatorship the government superimposes itself on parliament and makes parliament subservient to it. This is the danger we face at the present time.

I was interested the other day to read a community, weekly newspaper published in the capital area. An article in the newspaper was written by the member of parliament who is chairman of the Special Committee on Procedure and Organization. The article reads in part as follows:

Basic Problem.

"Too little time and too much talk" are the basic problems of parliament. The scandal of parliament today is that it has not been able to tackle all the important problems it should.

So said the chairman of the Special Committee on Procedure and Organization.

An hon. Member: He is right.

Mr. Thompson: That is not true, because every piece of legislation the government wanted to pass has been passed. The Prime Minister himself has admitted this.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I apologize to the hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Thompson) for interrupting him, but I wanted to invite a little more silence on the part of hon. members. However, when I rose, silence reigned. Therefore, I apologize to the hon. member for interrupting and I shall give him an extra minute after ten o'clock.

Mr. Thompson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The very roots of the word "parliament" is that we, as representatives of the people, have a basic responsibility to express what we believe to be the thinking of our constituents and to give leadership through our comments here to individual, component constituencies as far as the nation is concerned. Anyone who talks the way the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Blair) did in his article does not understand the basic purpose and value of this institution.

I am discouraged tonight because I am convinced that the action the government has taken makes this one of the dark days of our nation.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Thompson: I plead with backbenchers on the other side of the house who laugh—