

*Extension of Sittings*

I would draw the attention of Hon. Members to the third paragraph of Her Excellency the Governor General's Speech in which she said:

"The purpose of this early session of the Thirty-fourth Parliament is to seek your approval for legislation to implement this Agreement as scheduled."

That is a goal, I will not say a commendable goal, but it is from some points of view an understandable one. But in the fifth paragraph of this self-same speech we find this sentence: while this is going on—

"Meanwhile, you may be asked at the present session to consider others matters as deemed advisable by my government."

What we have is a situation in which the Governor General has warned us that we may be facing other public Bills at this session. Hence, again, it is prudent that, if the Government is determined to trample the rights of the House of Commons, the Commons at least attempt to defend itself to the extent of narrowing that elephantine tap dance to the scope of Bill C-2 where, to quote from the motion, we will have a situation in which:

"—the provisions of Standing Order 73(1) and (2) respecting committee stage of Public Bills be suspended,—"

"And that Bill C-2", assuming the amendment to be successful, "be ordered for referral to Committee of the Whole". Thus, presumably, if we do get other Public Bills during the course of this, we have been told, brief sitting for the purpose of considering the trade legislation, we may at least reasonably consider those in the proper committee. Perhaps. The wording remains unclear in that regard, but we must assume the intent of the Government in moving this amendment to limit the effect of the motion to Bill C-2 is that any other Public Bill get the full treatment.

We have an amendment from members of the Government that I, in all honesty, must seriously contemplate supporting because anything that will limit the effect of this iniquitous and offensive resolution is greatly to be considered.

I would in this regard, if I may, draw the attention of Hon. Members to the Bill of Rights. By the way, I do not mean the Bill of Rights of our neighbour to the south. I mean our Bill of Rights, that Bill of Rights, which, by virtue of the British North America Act now the Constitution Act, 1867, granted us the rights and liberties originally taken by the British people as a consequence of the Glorious Revolution of 1688, when

the corrupt and venal Stuart King was deposed, and which was enshrined in—and I believe it was the second Act of 1688—an Act Declaring the Rights and Liberties of the Subject and Settling the Succession of the Crown. I would especially draw Hon. Members' attention to a couple of sections of our Bill of Rights, for the time being at least; who knows?

First, the preamble concludes as follows:

"And thereupon the said Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, pursuant to their respective Letters and Elections, being now assembled in a full and free Representative of this Nation, taking into their most serious Consideration the best Means for attaining the Ends aforesaid—"

It is basically the rights and liberties of the subjects, if I may interpolate:

"—do in the first Place (as their Ancestors in like Case have usually done) for the vindicating and asserting their ancient Rights and Liberties, declare—"

Herein those 13 points which constitute our Bill of Rights, including point number 9 which reads:

"That the Freedom of Speech, and Debates or Proceedings in Parliament, ought not to be impeached or questioned in any Court or Place out of Parliament."

Is it so unreasonable to assert here tonight, Madam Speaker, that, in fact, the otherwise proper proceedings of this House of Commons have been questioned in a place outside of this Parliament, that place being the chambers of the Government?

Have they not decided to restrict the functioning of this House of Commons in a manner unnecessary, but definitely odious, solely for the purpose of depriving those roughly three-eighths of the Members of this House who are here for the first time of the opportunity to consider and debate fully what all sides of the House agree to be the most important legislation placed before it, certainly since the Second World War? If that does not constitute a move that falls at least within the ambit of the ninth point of our Bill of Rights, then I must confess myself greatly surprised.

I would finally point to the conclusion of that section which follows the thirteenth point in the Bill where the Parliament of the United Kingdom in this Act says:

"And they do claim, demand, and insist upon all and singular the Premises, as their undoubted Rights and Liberties; and that no Declarations, Judgments, Doings, or Proceedings, to the Prejudice of the People in any of the said Premises, ought in any wise to be drawn hereafter into Consequence or Example."