

the constitutional debate, after a budget, after having passed all the budget bills, which was the first time in over twenty years. So I would respectfully submit to him that he should consider being a little more human and, rather than taking a position which would hinder rather than facilitate a negotiated settlement of the postal dispute, I would respectfully suggest to him, if he keeps on, unless there are new developments which would make him change his mind or explain to me his position, which I may have misunderstood, that at this point if he wants to help the settlement of the postal dispute he must not count on the government legislating the postal workers back to work. Also he had better not think that by keeping hon. members here he will in fact force the government to introduce legislation to that effect. I think I made that quite clear. I will not repeat what I said in the other official language.

I would finally like to congratulate all parliamentarians, for their good faith, and that includes the Leader of the Opposition, because I have never questioned their good faith and the efforts they made in the last months to try and improve the quality of life of Canadians. Of course we do not always agree with each other's methods, but it is the role of the opposition to criticize us. I do not expect to be paid compliments. I expect to be criticized and that is normal. However, there are things that must be said. I think that beyond party politics we are all men and women who, sincerely believe they are doing their best to improve the quality of life in Canada. I believe that the best way to act at this point is to allow members, not to go on holidays, but to go and meet with their constituents in their ridings, to go and meet with their people, to go to their offices, as all of us on both sides of the House intend to do. For someone to say that—

● (1440)

[*English*]

—“We won't allow the members of Parliament to go on holiday before any strike is settled,” that is wrong. It is not a matter of a holiday. It is a matter of allowing the members of Parliament, after ten months, to be able to go to their constituencies and meet with their people so they will know what the people really want and they can try to solve the problems of their constituents, who have the right to see them. That is one very important aspect, too. The role of the parliamentarian, I agree, is to legislate and to debate in the House of Commons. However, when we have achieved what we have during the last ten months, having passed 65 bills, a budget, all the financial bills, the Constitution, a lot of major bills have been adopted, above the average compared to previous sessions of Parliament, I say that it is unfair if someone prevents hon. members from going as soon as possible to their regions to explain, to listen and to meet with their constituents, and to allow the easterner to go to western Canada and westerners to come to eastern Canada.

That is what we have in mind when we say it is about time we adjourn today. We do not want a holiday. I think some hon. members deserve a holiday. They will take two weeks or

three weeks, and that is fine. However, hon. members know very well that we will not be on holiday for three months. It is wrong to say that. We are not going on holiday for three months; we are going to do our job, which is different, another aspect of our job, working very hard in our constituencies over two and one-half months. That is what we want to do, and no later than today.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Clark:** Mr. Speaker, let me begin on a soft note on two matters on which the President of the Privy Council and I can agree. One of those certainly has to do with the expression of our appreciation on this side of the House to all of those who work in association with the House of Commons as employees, or in jobs which are associated with the House of Commons. They are called upon to perform tasks with unusual demands, and all of us in this Parliament on all sides of the House, are deeply grateful for the work they have done and want to take this opportunity, as we begin an adjournment motion debate, to express our deep gratitude to them all.

● (1450)

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Clark:** The other matter on which I want to express some very real identity of interest is the references the President of the Privy Council made to parliamentary reform. I am pleased that he has found so useful the innovation of parliamentary task forces which my government began. If he takes a look at some of the other proposals for parliamentary reform which were introduced during the period we were in office I am sure he will find other elements of value. I am pleased to see him nodding his head. I am prepared to accept his word that he is genuinely interested in the reform of this place because, frankly, I cannot imagine how anyone who has spent any time here can be satisfied at all with the way the rules of Parliament now limit the ability of individual members of Parliament on either side of the House to do the job we are sent here to do, which is to have influence upon the public policy of the land.

Certainly it is my view—it has been my conviction through my life here, and I am pleased to hear a similar view expressed by the President of the Privy Council—that there have to be changes which allow individual members to have more influence upon the events of Parliament. He has given us his word that he will not introduce reforms which will limit the powers of the opposition. He will understand if we want to wait to see what he is proposing before we accept that word, but certainly there is major institutional work to be done here.

We have to change the rules of this place because it is one of the greatest wastes in the country to have a situation where some 30 people, who happen to sit at the Privy Council and in the centre of the government side of the House of Commons, have most of the influence and power in this Parliament, where there are 282 members, and all the rest of the members of the House of Commons have relatively little influence upon the events of the day. It was not for that reason that Parliament