

Administration of Justice

Mr. R. N. Thompson (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to prolong the debate at this time if it is the consensus that we should adjourn. On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, I think it would be tragic if we should cut off the debate at this time and come back again on Monday to start at the same point we are now.

An hon. Member: Maybe not.

Mr. Thompson: We have not accomplished very much in these two days, except to lower further the image this house should enjoy, and to bring disrepute upon all of us who are part of it.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a few comments in support of the suggestion made by the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam (Mr. Douglas) that some basis for negotiation or for agreement might be reached that might continue over the week end. Then, when we return on Monday we will have an alternative to what we have before us at the present time. There must be some answer to the problem which would avoid having to come back and continue with the same question of privilege. Unless something is done, we might continue in the same direction we are now going for another week.

I urge, in the name of reason and common sense, that all those here this afternoon realize that what is now happening is just further dividing us, and keeping us from the work that we should be doing. It is increasing further the differences of opinion and the bitterness which has developed out of this debate.

It seems to me that what we have seen happening here these last two days has provided a sorry spectacle, the consequences of which will be tragic if there is not a complete change of direction.

Mr. Lambert: Who started it?

Mr. Thompson: In recent years, this parliament has been dominated by some men who have used it as their private toy, as an arena for private vendettas. We have seen men fearful of the truth hiding behind bluster and innuendo. We have seen men playing to the gallery for publicity. We have seen the even more sinister fact of alliances growing up based on differences of race and language, as well as those on party lines.

It is difficult to say where the bulk of the blame should be placed; whether on the lack of leadership of the government, or the obstructionist tactics of the official opposition.

Allocating the blame is not our desire at this time.

Mr. Kindt: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wish the hon. member for Red Deer would name the people who are causing the roadblocks that he mentioned just now.

Mr. Thompson: The allocating of blame is not the major concern at this moment.

Mr. Kindt: You said the official opposition. I say, withdraw that.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Thompson: It does not have to be withdrawn, Mr. Speaker, because the record of *Hansard* and the press for the last couple of years is evidence of all this.

How long do we think we can continue to wrangle in this house while the direction of the country shifts? If we do not give leadership and administration, someone else will. It is only by dint of good provincial governments providing leadership in their own areas that we have been allowed to bicker away the years that we already have.

Look at the situation we have here. We have banks trying to operate under an act that is technically no longer in force—

Mr. Lambert: Yes it is.

Mr. Thompson: —and is due for drastic revision. We have put off and put off this revision, and we are about to put it off again. Why has this happened, Mr. Speaker? It has happened because of what goes on in this house.

We have farmers trying to survive under agricultural legislation that is so far behind the times it is laughable. We have educational institutions trying to compete in an age of advanced technology, supported by an uncertain and haphazard grant structure.

We embark on unwieldy state welfare procedures, such as the ill conceived Canada Pension Plan foisted on us without any real study of priorities and needs.

Miss LaMarsh: You had better check that.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have the impression that the hon. member is not applying himself to the question of privilege that is before the house at this time. I appreciate the fact that hon. members who have taken part in the debate have not always limited themselves to the subject at hand. However, the hon. member's remarks seem to be quite some distance from the question of privilege, and I ask him to return to the consideration of that.