

Procedure and Organization

such as bilingualism and biculturalism, the constitution, and instead, involve itself with the needs and issues that really concern people? Inadequate housing and employment and galloping inflation are the matters that are currently making a mockery of our egalitarian ideal. It is time we spent our summer debating issues such as these rather than a gag rule such as 75c.

It is obvious to everyone the government will not bring forward legislation to deal with unemployment and inflation, and I do not believe it wants to. In spite of the lesson in Manitoba the government continues to be contemptuous of what the Canadian people are trying to tell it. I wish to quote from an article by Peter Regenstreif which appeared in the June 23 issue of the *Toronto Daily Star*:

Bilingualism or "the constitution" are irrelevant to the great majority of Canadians. Ask a national sample of voters: "What do you feel are the most important problems government should do something about?" and the answers come back—high taxes, the high cost of living, housing, unemployment. Pose the same question to top officials in government, industry, communications, and to the better educated—in other words to the elites—and the most frequently mentioned reply has something to do with relations between French and English or government.

It is easy to claim that such differences in orientation are to be expected because they spring from the different backgrounds and needs of the various groups involved. Unfortunately, many often go on from this to claim that politics is not simply the business of counting noses but requires what they like to call "leadership." That is, the leaders of a society know best what's good for it and so while the working-class whites in the United States and the mass public in Canada may want something, they shouldn't be allowed to get it unless it squares with what the elite feels it should have.

This argument tends to be heard more often in Canada than in the United States but it hardly matters, it seems to me, what should or should not be the case. If the leadership of a society ever really holds this view for very long, it will find itself without a society to lead.

I did not come to Ottawa to indulge in silly little games like this, Mr. Speaker, but if this is the way the game is played, I guess we will have to play it out to the bitter end. The people of Canada regard parliament and parliamentarians with contempt. When Canadian citizens are on the way to their summer cottages, vacations and camping trips, they read about parliament sitting in the oppressive atmosphere of the Ottawa summer squabbling endlessly, not about important legislation but about some obscure, barely understandable rule, some brainchild of the government, designed to limit discussion on something or

other sometime in the future. Here we are frittering our time away on a debate which is virtually meaningless to many Canadians. We are using what little brains God gave most of us figuring out picayune devices like quorum calls and other phoney stunts designed to embarrass the government in order for it to come to its senses and depart from the stupid position it has taken.

● (4:40 p.m.)

An hon. Member: We have no choice.

Mr. Rose: All right. Here we are engaged in a debate in which perhaps everything of real importance has been said in the first four speeches. The value of the contribution by the extra speakers might be judged not in relation to what they say but how long they take in saying it. Any speech shorter than 39 minutes is considered in this debate to be a very poor speech. When the debate on the amendment is concluded we will all be making 39 minute speeches on the main motion just to prolong this war of attrition until something gives and sanity once more is allowed to prevail.

Here we are in the opposition forced into the role of defiant schoolboys, who have been kept in after school in the detention room by an overbearing school principal in the person of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and his petulant sabre-rattling hatchet man, the house leader, Mac the Knife, who now has himself manoeuvred into a corner where he can only back down with a tremendous loss of face, accompanied naturally by the justified scorn of the combined opposition, an opposition whose mood of operation I am afraid is now at an end and that now is determined to see this through to the bitter finale whatever and whenever that may be.

It has been said before, but I believe it bears repeating, that this government has had the full co-operation of the opposition all session. Not that we have dealt with anything very radical or new this year. Most of the time admittedly has been devoted to a clean-up of the old Pearson legislation. The major bills such as the drug bill, the Criminal Code amendments and the language bill were in virtually their final form last year when the government was defeated and later dissolved graciously by the new leader. Certainly these pieces can be regarded as important, but what else is new; what else has the government proposed this year that would justify the faith Canadians placed in it last June? What has been accomplished this session to

[Mr. Rose.]