

Procedure and Organization

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Peddle: I think that short editorial ought to be contained in the records of this house.

The second role of an open parliament is its power in helping to legitimize and make more tangible our polity; that is our central government. This power is more subtle and more hypothetical; it is difficult to speak of but is equally serious. What I term the evocative power is the responsibility of the whole house, and the stakes within the political system are primarily those of the government.

It is now generally admitted that one of the vivid dangers of the large administrative unit of the state or economy stems from an individual's sense of participation or power. Men come to see themselves as instruments or as statistics. Some accept this view, and are thereby emasculated. Others retreat to a life of private happiness, while some reply and are more likely frustrated and in this dissatisfaction alienation is born.

● (9:00 p.m.)

Many of us have asked ourselves whether we want a society whose government systems consistently alienate its people and make them unproductive and hostile. I believe many of us in this house are in politics to help avoid such a fate for the Canadian people, yet this government does not seem to want our help. If we try to revive a sense of integration and dignity for our people, one of the most difficult problems we will have to face will be the alienation of the individual from the political process.

The term "participatory democracy" is not ours. Participatory democracy is healthy. A creative relationship between the state and the citizens is absolutely essential. However, as democrats we believe this evocative and legitimate power cannot adequately or safely be allowed only to the executives. Nevertheless, if this present government feels this power needs to be shared with the legislature to assure its potency and avoid tyranny, then what in the name of heaven is the reason for 75c? For this assembly to have the strength and evoke the trust and commitment on the part of our people, it must be representative in the full sense of the word.

The House of Commons must be allowed to remain a human institution of representation. This seems too costly to this government because if parliament were like that, it could not be fully predictable. The government would not be able to tell on Monday every word that would be spoken or every action

that would take place on the following Friday. That would not do for this government. It would be completely and utterly unpredictable. The business of this house cannot be only the business of Treasury Board and frontbenchers because, to be trusted and noticed, it must represent and reconcile the passions, ideals and even the prejudices of the people. That must take place here and it is necessary.

The unity of our country will not be found in business practices or procedures. What is the danger to this and future governments if this house is forgotten and loses its evocative power? In a free society where the commitment of its members requires trust and understanding, due process and power are inter-dependent. If commitment and trust are lost, government loses a great deal of its power. For a positive government the power of its measures is not found necessarily in royal assent, but with the assent of the people governed.

Last fall the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) spoke of the obligation of our public men to avoid the kind of civil disaster for Canada that is being experienced in some parts of the United States. Unfortunately, he has learned a few lessons from this nearby tragedy. Was not the essence of the United States crisis that her Congress was allowed to become irrelevant? Was not the Viet Nam issue forced from the councils of government to the streets of the cities of the United States? I argue that in a democratic society the imposition of rule 75c imperils the strength of government and also the strength and quality of national life.

Among us here, many of the young and all the glib, have decided that business procedure is the one and only measure of parliament. Certainly there is an anxiety to accomplish more. I think we all share this feeling. We have all proven our concern for this objective. In appealing to the positive ambitions of the government, I ask hon. members to deeply reconsider rule 75c to save this government from its arrogance so that it may begin to govern with some degree of wisdom. The government talks about streamlining, Mr. Speaker. They say parliament has to be streamlined but, as an hon. member brought out very pointedly this afternoon, this is a big thing to streamline. Canada is a very large sprawling country, Mr. Speaker, with different regions, races, geographical locations, religions and ethnic backgrounds. How far can they go toward streamlining a parliament of 264 members, bearing in mind the