

*Summer Recess*

strictly no difference to the working of Parliament. Those members have no fear to be overthrown, they are already. But on this side of the House, with a majority of only 12 seats, we are duty bound to be here on a Monday to Friday basis. Ministers must leave to represent the government somewhere. I had said 12 members but I had included Madam Speaker, so it is more like 11. As I said, ministers have duties outside the House and must absolutely absent themselves to represent the government. Therefore if we do not want to find ourselves under the threat of an election, we have to be here. Meanwhile what is happening? We are away from our ridings to do our job as law makers in this House but we also have the responsibility of working as representatives of our constituents.

How can this be done? We leave on Fridays and rush to our constituencies where we work over the weekend. Many people are not aware of the fact that MPs, particularly government MPs have a very tough job—

**Mr. Dionne (Chicoutimi):** Seven days a week.

**Mr. Tausignant:** Yes, as my colleague from Chicoutimi has said, it is seven days a week. For my part, I can say that I have been a member of Parliament for two years and that I have still not taken any holidays. That is a fact. I must also say that before being elected, Mr. Speaker, I had a house in the South and I have had to sell it because I cannot get away. That is true for most people here. We work from 15 to 16 hours a day. Members of the government have to be on the Hill at 8 in the morning for meetings, and every day, we stay here until 10, 10.30, 11 or midnight. Since the beginning of the session, we have not been idle, and in addition, we go back to our constituencies, not to rest but to work, and not simply to meet individual voters, but also various social groups, individuals, municipal bodies, and so on, to learn about their problems. If we really want to govern this country properly, we have to start by seeing what is going on in our own regions, at the grass roots, and by talking with the people to determine how their problems can be rectified.

The opposition is holding us hostage. Mr. Speaker, we hear a lot about the hijacking of airplanes, but for me, what is going on here is political hijacking. For heaven's sake, today is July 17, the days are beginning to get shorter, and still no thought has been given to the fact that those who work for the House should be able to take some time off. As for us, as I said earlier, our work does not stop here. In spite of all this, we have to try to see something of our family, our children, who no longer know us when we go back home, and also to see people and learn about their problems.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, as we must be philosophical when faced with such situations, we have to tell ourselves that there must certainly be a positive aspect to all this.

I hope that if there is to be a positive side to the current situation it will be, as this has been said so often this evening, the opportunity to get rid of this antiquated system under

which Parliament operates, and to go ahead as early as next fall with some type of parliamentary reform that will make this Parliament more effective, without palavering and loss of precious time.

Mr. Speaker, based on the yearly cost of operating this House, each day costs some \$360,000. But who cares about that? If we chose to, we could reach a much higher level of efficiency by using very simple means, if we took the trouble next fall, under parliamentary reform, to address those problems, to ensure that we do not fall back into that same masochistic ghetto. We tolerate this situation, it goes on and on, and we see no improvement over the years. Every time a new member first arrives here, he hopes that things will improve, but over the years everything remains almost static.

To conclude, I would express the hope that next fall, hon. members from both sides of the House will work together on in-depth reform. We are here 282 MPs elected by the citizens of this country. It seems to me that we would be in a position to manage the country if we gave ourselves the tools to do so. But we entrench ourselves in what I called that ghetto that literally impedes our operations. Therefore it is useless to go on much longer, Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat bitter that we still are forced to make speeches here tonight and repeat the same comments for the nth time.

● (2230)

[*English*]

**Mr. Gordon Taylor (Bow River):** Mr. Speaker, in military manoeuvres if you want to deceive the other side and not let them know what you are doing, you set up a smoke screen. Tonight we have seen the masters of setting up smoke screens in regard to public affairs. We saw it first of all in the speech of the hon. member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) who had a lot to say. He told us that he would gladly have gone home a week ago had this party not held Parliament here. Mr. Speaker, few members of that party have been in the House during this entire week. The financial critic has not been here nor has the energy critic, yet the hon. member talked as if he wanted to stay here all the time. Today his party moved a motion to adjourn the House, using it as a smoke screen, pretending that they did not want to go home, when it is obvious that they have been trying to go home since last week.

This party voted against the motion because we are opposed to an adjournment. We did not want to waste this last day, neither do we want to adjourn now but it is being forced upon us.

Just a few moments ago the hon. member for Parkdale-High Park (Mr. Flis) also set up a smoke screen, pretending that everything is well but that this party had caused difficulties in committee. Mr. Speaker, we had people come from the province of Alberta to that committee. They spent a lot of money to come here and plead with the finance committee to give them a few more days so that they would not have to borrow money or at least would enable them to extend their bills for a few days. The chairman did not even mention that in his