

*Government Orders*

If there are some ideas here worth debating, let us take the time to debate them. I realize that appeal will probably fall on deaf ears too because the government has set things in motion. According to the minister's notice of motion, come tomorrow we will be punching our last few hours and having our last kick at the cat, as it were, in terms of saying what we believe is wrong with this. In the interest of having my opportunity to say what is wrong with it, let me move on.

• (1750)

By way of background, it was my privilege to have been a part of the committee that preceded the McGrath committee after the 1984 election. I was part of the earlier committee of which His Honour, the now Lieutenant-Governor of Newfoundland, was also a member. The minister of energy, the Deputy Prime Minister, and the gentleman who is now the Governor General were members. The former member and now senator Tom Lefebvre was the chairman. The member for Peace River was a member. The gentleman from Winnipeg Transcona was a member and, as I say, I was a member. I think there were 18 of us altogether who over a two-year period in 1982-1983 did under the chairmanship of Tom Lefebvre, a very thorough job of revamping and reviewing the rules of the House to ensure they would better serve the people who sent us here.

Indeed the committee did its job so well that after the government changed in 1984 and the new administration under the present Prime Minister took over it essentially restructured the committee. Given that the government had changed, it obviously made a government member chairman in the person of Mr. McGrath. It restructured the committee with almost all the same members and the committee in short order, in a matter of several months, brought in under Mr. McGrath's leadership essentially the same package of recommendations that the former committee under the chairmanship of the now Senator Lefebvre had worked on for a couple of years.

What does that tell us? First of all it tells us that the job had been well done. It also tells us that the job had the acquiescence or the support of two different parties which subsequently formed the government: one before 1984 and one after 1984. It goes without saying that it also had the support of the third party, the NDP, that had

a couple of members on both the committee prior to 1984 and the one after 1984.

For the first time in literally decades we had an all-party consensus on a number of far-reaching measures which would not only streamline this place but make it more accountable and give more power to the private members. In general it would streamline the place in a way that would redound to the benefit of the people across this country who sent us here. That is the background.

The sad truth is that today, less than five or six years after those proposals were put through under the sponsorship of the present administration, we now see a wholesale gutting procedure. You can call it nothing else. You can put the best face on it you want to. You can sit there and tell me that you have come up with a good package, but I know the difference.

I know that the member for Peace River, the deputy government House leader, who was on that committee in 1982, 1983 and again in 1985 made a very worthwhile contribution. Indeed, if we were to go back and check the minutes we would find a number of places where the very procedures he is now scuttling are ideas that he promoted. I remember particular occasions where he was the mover of motions to bring about some of the changes that he now is party to undoing.

If we are concerned as individual politicians why it is people out there have a certain cynicism about us at times, is it any wonder when they see a gentleman like the gentleman from Peace River do a Jekyll and Hyde on this one and when they see the minister of fitness and amateur sport do what he did just now, he a former guardian of this place as the Deputy Speaker.

I have listened during the last two or three days to the debate. I have heard Tory MPs say with great passion how they want to get back to their electorate. They want to go home. They want to go to their constituencies. They want to go back and actually talk to their electors. They are actually admitting in public that they want to talk to Canadians.

That alone ought to be reason enough for us to embrace this whole thing so fast, before they change their minds, because we now have an army of men and women numbering more than 100 over there who actually had a road to Damascus experience.