

*Procedure and Organization*

● (3:50 p.m.)

There are many independent observers in Canada who believe that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the coterie around him are deliberately trying to downgrade parliament. Here we have the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey) going out west and making a public statement about a legislative program relating to minimum wages; yet he had refused to give this information in the house. My colleague the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings (Mr. Hees) asked time after time whether the government proposed to do anything about minimum wages. All we received were evasive answers or no answers at all. The Minister of Labour has shown his contempt for parliament by going out west and making an announcement on what the government proposes to do.

Rule 75c is the crowning glory of the first year of the just society. We must ask ourselves, is it not appropriate that this should be the year, and does it not really sum up brilliantly the style, the content and the record of this government in the first year of the just society? What could be more fitting than that this year should come to an end with those hon. gentlemen in the cabinet who have such a thirst for justice trying to get a firm grip on the throat of a minority parliamentary opposition? What could be more appropriate?

Behold the modern men who were going to make parliament and democracy mean something again, especially to the poor and the disadvantaged—literally millions of people in our Canadian society. Behold the politics of participation. Behold the government that excited the youth of Canada a year ago and has so disillusioned them since. Behold the just society—secretive, intolerant, vengeful, petulant, autocratic and childish.

The government probably feels it has to bring in 75c in the hope that it can blame parliament for its miserable record of accomplishment in its first year, so conspicuous for its under-achievement. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has blamed everybody else for the government's lack of action. He has blamed the provinces, he has hidden behind the constitution and he has whined about his treatment by the newspapers and the press. Indeed, Sir, the first session of Parliament with him as Prime Minister might well be described as being for him "the days of 'whine' and roses"—w-h-i-n-e.

What a dismal end to the first year of the just society—rule 75c! A year ago there were

high hopes and expectations throughout this country. Now for a whole year, on some of the most pressing economic, social, political and international issues in face of truly gripping human problems at home and throughout the world, the Prime Minister of Canada has played intellectual games. In answer to questions on urgent human problems, whether posed in this house or elsewhere, he likes to argue about how many angels can stand on the head of a constitutional pin. And the most depressing spectacle of all is that of ministers of the Crown trying to emulate him and in the process performing acrobatics with their intellects and contortions with their principles.

These are grown men, some of whom once had a little fire in their souls and some convictions in their heads and in their voices. Now they are all kept on an intellectual leash by their leader, led into the house three times a week and led out again three days a week.

I am sorry the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. MacEachen) is not here because he comes to mind as a once formidable debater and an experienced parliamentarian. He was one of the most important members of the Pearson government from 1963 to 1968. He has not made a speech in the house on a government measure since last Christmas. Even then he was put up to erect a verbal smokescreen behind which the government quickly withdrew rule 16A. There is a rumour in Nova Scotia that the minister fell down a mineshaft seven months ago and has not been heard from since.

What comes from all this submissiveness and where does it lead to? I commend for the study of all members opposite, in fact all members of the house but especially the backbenchers on the government side, the case of the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Blair). I do not think it is putting it too strongly to say that up until Tuesday the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) was willing to use the hon. member and to see him destroyed as chairman of a committee and as a member of the house in order that the minister and the cabinet could get their own way. That is a fact. The minister cared nothing for the integrity, the reputation or even the pride of the chairman of the Committee on Procedure and Organization. Indeed, the handful of members opposite, some of whom waited on the President of the Privy Council, (Mr. Macdonald) perhaps in his office, on Tuesday morning should not think it was their entreaties that changed his mind. What changed his mind was that there was a motion coming from this side of the