

Procedure and Organization

opposition, or that reform meant that parliament should be a rubber stamp to be used at the whim of the government. At no time did we give any indication to the government that this was what we had in mind when we talked of reform. Quite the contrary.

We have also shown our good faith in that, as I understand it, we have accepted proposed Standing Orders 75A and 75B in principle. I do not think that is questioned. Rule 75A provides for a time allocation when there is all party agreement; 75B provides for time allocation when the majority of the four parties agree. However, what we do not accept and will never accept is rule 75c, which gives the government power to limit debate without the agreement of any other party. That is the provision to which we take exception, and it is what this debate is all about.

This is why we on this side are standing and will continue to stand and fight for our very lives. Having first been presented with rule 16A, the iniquitous rule 75c is further proof of the arrogant attitude taken by this government in its attempt to downgrade parliament and the role of its members. What is ironic about the government's attempt to downgrade the effectiveness of parliament and the worth of its members is that not only are the member for Hamilton West and the hon. member for Cape Breton-East Richmond (Mr. MacInnis) affected, but all members are affected, including the government backbenchers.

Our parliamentary institution is one of the great bastions of our democratic way of life. History has shown this to be a fact, and it will continue to show it to be a fact if only we can bring this government to life. Our parliamentary system should not be tampered with lightly under the guise of improving efficiency; this is a great institution and we cannot treat it lightly.

It seems to me that a very frightening pattern has been established since I have been a member of this parliament. Although I am a baby at the game, I am certainly learning fast. One need be here no longer than eight months to know what it is all about, where it's at and all the rest of it.

An hon. Member: What about your partners?

Mr. Alexander: My partners are ready to shaft you any time you want to stand up. I do not expect too much interruption from the other side, Mr. Speaker, because I am talking

responsibly. I am concerned at the frightening pattern that is being developed by this government. And I am not the only one who is frightened. Members of the government—those who cannot speak—people on the street, those who sent us here to protect our rights, are becoming concerned at the deliberate trend that appears, to me at any rate, to be leading us ultimately into the realm of dictatorship.

We use this institution to question cabinet ministers on matters of urgent and national scope. But the Prime Minister has said that no matters are national or urgent any longer, and accordingly we have the cabinet roster. Today, there were present six ministers. I should like to know where the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) was because I had a question for him. He was supposed to be here today. I also had a question for the Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier). Where was he today? It was not an earth shaking question, but it was one that I thought would be of interest to the house and the nation.

Mr. MacInnis: Certainly not hypocritical!

Mr. Alexander: No, not hypocritical. Another worsening attitude, one I find disgusting, is the flippant manner of ministers during the question period. After all, they are ordinary members of parliament just like the hon. member for Hamilton West. I demand respect from them as I, in turn, give them respect. I am not here to play games. Perhaps they are and that is why they are not here for such long periods. I suppose they might as well get their licks in while they have the opportunity.

Then, there is the rudeness of the Prime Minister. I wish I had the nerve to stand up in my place and tell him a few things. I wish I were the hon. member for Cape Breton-East Richmond. When the Prime Minister uses a word like "hypocrisy" in talking about a responsible and loyal opposition, then it goes down very hard, if it goes down at all. He says that this debate is a filibuster, but I do not think he knows what a filibuster is.

Mr. Crouse: A "stupid" filibuster.

Mr. Alexander: Yes, I did not mention the adjective. This is the place for debate. There will always be debate as long as there is an opposition and, believe me, we are going to continue to have an opposition. That is part of the pattern. What about the unwarranted rudeness of the Prime Minister? What about standing committees, Mr. Speaker? This was