

Supply

going on. So what we see is that in the same way as we hear arguments about the marketplace, arguments that people are able to make free choices and that this collection of free individual decisions is the way the world unfolds, we hear the same fallacy here. In the same way as the marketing people in the private sector go out and attempt to create a want, in order to meet that want and obtain a profit the government is doing the same sort of thing. Both the government and the private sector are claiming that they are simply responding to public opinion. They say they are neutral and are simply trying to meet the needs of the people. This argument, given 30 seconds' thought, falls to pieces. Nevertheless it is employed by the government.

● (1620)

The other thing, and here the Liberal Party is particularly culpable, is the void of leadership created when politics bears so little relationship to principle. I remind my Conservative friends, who often fall into the trap of wanting Members of Parliament to respond to a sort of delegatory view of democracy as opposed to a representative one and have Members of Parliament do whatever it is the majority of their constituents want them to do, regardless of the issue, of a quote by Edmund Burke, a Tory of some renown, who said:

Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion.

This is a way to introduce into this debate the appalling lack of principle which people have come to accept from the Liberal Party in this country. It has done immense damage to the quality of political debate and political life in this country.

What we have here when we talk about government by poll and by advertising is the death of policy, the death of debate around issues and the death of ideas. This is something which cannot continue for very long—indeed it has continued far too long already—without doing serious damage to the ability of Parliament to be properly seen as a place in which ideas are held, held firmly, are debated independently and for which people are prepared to defend their ideas by doing something more than quoting a poll.

We saw enough of that sort of politics on both sides of the constitutional debate. It was particularly regrettable when people wanted to defend their position, whatever it happened to be, by citing the latest Gallup poll. It got to be sickening after a while.

The fifth point I would like to mention is the abuse by the advertisers, and I talk here about Liberal advertisers, of the legitimate symbols of a country. Note for example the Liberal use of the advertising consortium known as Red Leaf Communications and the co-opting of other Canadian symbols in Liberal ads. Hon. members will recall Bob Rae, the former member for Broadview-Greenwood, who remarked following a series of ads on the Constitution in which Canada geese were depicted, and I quote:

I'll never be able to look at Canada geese or a beaver in quite the same way again, I'll see them as Liberals in disguise.

I said this in my first speech on the Constitution, but I will say it again because nobody paid attention. The Liberal Party did a disservice to this country by co-opting a lot of our symbols. One day I wore a maple leaf here, but only for one day, because so many people came up to me and said, "Blaikie, why are you wearing a Liberal pin?"

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Blaikie: The Liberals think that is funny. That is a terrible thing the Liberal government has done to the maple leaves. You can hardly pick up a Liberal pamphlet without being blinded by the red maple leaves. Members opposite may laugh. They see it as a good political strategy in the short run. In the long run, however, if all our symbols are associated with one political party, when we finally need to talk about unity, there will be nothing left to give the people which transcends the various political parties in this House. Thank God for the Queen. She is the one thing the Liberals have not yet contaminated, although they are probably trying.

Mr. Peterson: She is on government stamps.

Mr. Blaikie: There are other issues which the increasing use of polls and advertising touch upon. I will not have time to go into all of them. However, I want to deal for a moment with constitutional advertising. It was really bad that the Liberals were advertising their views of the Constitution before it was even passed in this House. As far as I am concerned, that broke all the barriers of political morality as far as advertising is concerned. I guess they were trying to equal their record in all other aspects of political life.

An advertising campaign will now be conducted on the Constitution. The people will not fall for that crap, this stuff they must watch on television. But there is one practical part of the ad, and that is that people may send in for information on the Constitution. That is the one useful part of the ad, and as the Secretary of State said, thousands have sent in requests.

People are amused by the advertising, but it does not do anything for national unity. When will the Liberal Party see that national unity is something you build from the ground up with a substantial sense of community and nationhood? It is not something you can foster through corny Canada Day celebrations and all sorts of other advertising that is amusing and nothing else. The stuff that passes for patriotism when it comes to the Liberal party is something to behold.

I think they are still feeling guilty about the whole constitutional process. Perhaps we should all feel guilty about the constitutional process. I do not think any of us were that great in that process. If we have to go out now and sell the thing through an advertising campaign, then we have really done a number! We now need a multimillion dollar advertising campaign to convince the Canadian people that what happened in the last two years was a good thing. That is really something!

It is up to Members of Parliament and all political parties to discuss the implications of the Constitution and the changes