

The Budget—Mr. Nesbitt

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, after a period of two years in which this government has been in office it would seem it is time we looked at ourselves in Canada to decide where we are going and where we are at, as some people say. It seems to me that society in Canada can no longer be accurately called the just society, but rather the controlled society. While I have heard some people refer to the present government as being comparable with the government of Louis XIV of France, I could not possibly agree with this because, authoritarian as that government might have been, at least it did accomplish something for the European continent. I would much rather compare the government with that of Louis XV, because the antics of some of the members of this government much more resemble the age of Louis XV in which very little was accomplished other than a great deal of travel and pleasure.

It is very evident that the government seems to have some sort of scheme or plan, as is sometimes said, about what is to be done with our society and our country, while very little attention seems to be paid to the increasing cost of living with its consequent hardship on those with fixed incomes and while very little is done to deal with our financial and other problems except an attempt to cause panic and confusion by the so-called proposals in the white paper and the consequent drawing in of the horns of all business organizations.

Nevertheless, the government found plenty of time to present legislation in the last two years, some of which unfortunately has been passed by this House, which had little to do with the urgent critical problems but which had something to do with some more distant and perhaps not so distant schemes. I refer to the attempt by this government to put the lid on all criticism of the government whether in this House or outside it. After all, it is an attempt to perpetuate itself in office.

I have often heard the party which forms this government characterized as the three "p's"—power, patronage and perpetuity. It is the last of these three adjectives with which I wish to deal this evening. I should like to refer to the debate held in this House last Tuesday in which we dealt with the attempt by two senior ministers of the government to muzzle the Auditor General. This, of course, is a culmination of the government's efforts to muzzle Parliament and suppress criticism outside Parliament.

[Mr. Buchanan.]

The first and most effective step in this regard when the present government came into office was to remove from this House control over government spending. After all, this was the original object of Parliament from the time of King John. In those days Parliament was designed to check the king's power to raise money and to have some say concerning how he spent it. This power was removed from this House over a year ago. Normally in this House we had the right to speak on the spending estimates of the government. These estimates have now all been removed to the committees on the pretext that they will receive more detailed study there.

We know what has happened. With so many committees meeting, the press—which of course is the opposition's only weapon—is unable to distribute itself around sufficiently to cover the discussion of the estimates. The approach of this government was to say that we can discuss the spending proposals and policies as much as we like, but that we must be finished by late May and if we have not finished by then we have no power to do anything about it. In the days prior to the introduction of these rules the opposition, in an emergency, had some control over the government through the discussion of the estimates and supplementary estimates because the procedure of closure for all practical purposes was unworkable. Therefore, the opposition had some control. That, however, no longer is the case.

As the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) said at that time, they baited the trap and the opposition fell for it. I must admit that the Prime Minister was very right, because, a smokescreen having been raised in respect of the so-called rule 75C, the real danger was slipped through the House in the form of the removal of the control over government spending. That was the first stop. A number of things have happened since then. We had the hate bill. No one will quarrel with the first part of this bill in respect of genocide, and we need not discuss the second part. The third section resembles the procedure of the *Torquemada* in the days of the Spanish Inquisition. I refer, of course, to the fact that if someone should think you might have some political propaganda at election time, they could go to a judge and present a statutory declaration in respect of hate propaganda, a warrant to seize the literature would be issued and then seven days later you would