

Government Orders

but their values. If we are indeed bold enough to bring this process of change, we will have succeeded in creating a government with priorities based on equity, fairness and service to the people of Canada.

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member on his speech. I concur with just about everything.

However, in agreeing with the member on the atrocity of the pensions and in fact in MPs collecting pensions prior to 60 or 65 years of age, while agreeing with the member—and it is hard for anyone in Canada to disagree—I have to point out right now that there are former members of the House who lost in the last election who are collecting pensions way before they are 60.

I constantly hear that Canadians are very angry about this. I heard it again all weekend from my constituents at our annual general meeting and at my constituency opening.

Does the government have any plans or some kind of process in place, something that we can address this with, to prevent right now those who are receiving this pension prematurely?

Mr. Calder: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member of the Reform Party for that question.

As I stated in my speech these are all things that are under review at the present time. No, I cannot say we are going to stop this immediately. It is a review that is going to be done, not only by the Liberal Party but by the Reform Party, the Bloc Party and any independent members as I understand the process. By that we are reflecting the view of all Canadians.

Yes, I heard the same thing during the election and I referred to it in my speech. I know this is an issue that will be settled in the near future.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, I found the hon. member's speech very interesting, particularly in respect of the special interest groups and lobbies that we are all faced with from time to time.

It is very easy to react immediately and say that we should pass some sort of legislation to stop this, but I would just like to make the member aware of a process that some of us use in the Reform Party, that is having a special interest log book in the riding.

I would like to ask the member if perhaps he could take this approach as well. In my riding, whenever I tell special interest groups or write to tell them that I am making an entry into my special interest log book, the reaction is amazing. They become upset that they are going to be put in front of the people of my riding for scrutiny. It works very well for me. I wonder if the hon. member might consider that as an alternative to legislation that he can use immediately.

Mr. Calder: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for that excellent idea. It is something that we will probably take and incorporate in the way that we run our constituency offices and our Ottawa offices here.

It just goes to prove what I stated in my speech. If the House becomes more and more open we will be getting ideas from all sides. It is just the fact that the government's ideas are not always the best. They will become a heck of a lot better if we listen to the opposition at the same time and try to incorporate all ideas.

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, the intervention by the government House leader reminds us again of Jeremy Bentham's point that constitutional laws are not made by any one actor alone. It is made by the constitutional company. In the case of the reforms proposed for this institution, Parliament, the reforms or the changes will be made by government initiatives and by the contributions from the opposition and the other parties in the House.

● (1325)

The debates have been constructive on issues where we have had open debates as in peacekeeping and the cruise missile testing. I think it signals good opportunities for the House to get the constitutional structures of Parliament moving again.

We do so in the light of two great principles of constitutionalism of our time, the alternance which is very apparent from government by executive to government by assembly. My colleagues in the Official Opposition will know that this has been true of French constitutional history since the French revolution. The alternance between the strong executive power and strong assembly power is I think one of the phenomena of our times, a check against an executive deemed to be too strong, a reinventing, a recreation or a creation anew as in the present Russia of power by assembly.

The other is the principle of participatory democracy. One of the implications for that is a requestioning of old truths such as those uttered by Edmund Burke and often quoted in the House. It is perhaps important to remember that Edmund Burke was not the product of a democratic system of election. His career in Parliament was facilitated, made possible, by being named to pocket boroughs or rotten boroughs and so the comments on responsibilities to his electors was meant for a handful of people and not the great mass of people that we are facing today.

The constitutional company here very clearly includes the Speaker. This unprecedented process of election saw some of the candidates for the Speakership by invitation address the Official Opposition, the Reform Party and then the Liberal Party in which advances were made in the comprehension of the Speaker's role, that the Speaker has the opportunity not merely