

people, or as the man on the street might say, to "shut their mouths" or keep them guessing for another year or two, or perhaps four years, if a general election can be that long postponed. It is to kill time, not to give the Maritimes justice. It is the old policy of postponement in a new form.

I point out to the House that this reference was made by the government by an order in council passed in June, 1925. That was eight months ago, and as far as I know little or nothing has been done in those eight months. The proof is that the government deemed it advisable in January of the present year to repeat its order in council on the subject matter. The repeat order in council was passed for the purpose of publicity in the Maritime provinces. It was shallow conduct on the part of the government, and it deceived no one in the Maritime provinces.

I want further to tell this House that in the decision which was handed out a short time ago by the deputy chief commissioner of the railway board, Thomas Vien, in the British Columbia rate case, reference is made to the general rate inquiry which was ordered by the government's orders in council I have mentioned. I am quoting this pious expression from the deputy chief commissioner's decision on the subject. This is how he spoke:

I sincerely hope that the general rate enquiry ordered by P.C. 886, and already well under way, will not take as much time. But several months, and perhaps over a year must of necessity elapse before it is concluded.

I do not need to dwell on this statement. It carries its own meaning, and suggests its own consequences to the Maritime provinces. June, 1925, was the starting point, and we are now in February, 1926. The deputy chief commissioner's decision is dated December 19, 1925. He says that perhaps over a year from this date must of necessity elapse before the board will get to the end of the general rate inquiry. That would bring us to February, 1927, and in all likelihood there will not be a report then. This I say judging by the past. The report may be delayed until it is too late in 1927 for parliament to deal with the matter. Maritime people will see the postponing hand in this. They know what it means. They have been suffering from it for half a century. But the clock is striking, and I again warn the government that the time for law courts and royal commissions is passed, and that the time has come when the Maritime provinces demand action from parliament and government. To delay action further is to defy parliament, to ignore the solemn agreements and statutes of 1903 and 1904, these conditions being again repeated in 1911 and 1914 and still unfulfilled. Railway

[Mr. W. A. Black.]

boards and royal commissions have no authority in this question. Parliament has laid down its national policy; the government knows what that policy is, and we demand that it busy itself in putting it into effect. The Maritimes are a unit in their demands for fair and reasonable treatment—treatment which to us belongs, which has been promised us by leaders in public life and by parliament, during the last sixty years. Truly, we have been a long-suffering and patient people.

An attempt has been made to blame the Conservative party for the condition of affairs which exists in this House at the present time. The Conservative party is accused of obstruction, of not permitting the business of the country to be carried on. But I would call the attention of hon. members to the fact, first, that no business has been put before us, and, second, that the government or what remains of this government, the wreckage, are coming to parliament, not with a majority, and asking us to go home for six weeks and spend our time there awaiting their convenience to call us together again.

I have in my hand a clipping from the *Citizen* of this morning. It states:

The process—

That is the process of delay and the debate which is being carried on here.

—kills time, but it leads so far to only one place—the public treasury, which has to whack up \$30,000 for every day the performance goes on, and many days it is not worth the money.

I ask: If expense is to cease, if a saving is to be made, why should an adjournment of this House take place for six weeks? Are the expenses of this House not really going on just the same, and if it is a fact that they are, why should the Conservative party be blamed for the expenditure of unnecessary money? The article further states:

They say—

That is the Conservatives.

—that if the government is able to be in office it should be able to function.

How true that is. We are gathered here together—what for? To perform the business of the country, and these hon. gentlemen opposite, after placing the Speech in the mouth of His Excellency, come forward and say: We want six weeks' holidays. Let us go home—some of us long distances—and come back again. Why? Because the government are not able to function, to carry on. The astonishing feature of the matter, not only to myself and to other hon. members, but to the whole country, is why they