

Mr. Friesen: First of all, I want to applaud the hon. member's speech. I thought the tone was excellent. I thought he was creative in the suggestions he made and I am particularly interested in his supportive concept of doing away with block voting. I am very much in support of that.

I wonder what we could do in order to do away with the label of having either bolted the party or been disloyal to the party. How can we destroy the old image of breaking cohesion if we do not continue block voting? I think the hon. member understands the dilemma. I would like to see us take up the cause of following his suggestion. I would like to see whether he has an immediate suggestion as to what we can do to break that kind of pattern in this House.

Mr. Lachance: If I were to be presumptuous I would say that if one approves my motion and puts it into application, it will lead to that. However, I will not be presumptuous. I will only say that that is the objective, but I do not think we can achieve that objective right away because the old reflexes are there. It will take a bit of time before we start to act responsibly, both as individuals and collectively.

However, what will be discussed in the committee will be a way, maybe as an experiment, in which we can give meaning to the so-called confidence motions. I do not know whether hon. members have ever asked why there are non-confidence motions if all the bills are non-confidence. Therefore, is it relevant to have a non-confidence motion if everything is confidence? Therefore, if one starts defining confidence and deciding when confidence will apply in true terms, one will get slowly to the point, of course, where one will be responsible. We will reach the point where we could get away from this very heavy burden that we all have to carry. However, that is somewhere down the road, and we will not get there like that, with a snap of the fingers.

Hon. Walter Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, may I begin my speech by sharing the sentiments expressed by my colleague, the hon. member for Surrey-White Rock-North Delta (Mr. Friesen) with respect to the very constructive attitude taken by the hon. member for Rosemont (Mr. Lachance). May I also say that I believe that speech of my hon. friend from Rosemont has set the tone which is very much needed in this House of Commons. It has been set also by certain other members. It is very much needed in this House as we consider this very important question of change.

• (1720)

I would also say something about the member for Surrey-White Rock-North Delta. The paper which is referred to, which was tabled in my name when I had the honour of serving a government in the House of Commons, was inspired to a great degree by the work which was done by the member for Surrey-White Rock-North Delta in the period of time preceding the opening of the Thirty-first Parliament. The work of that caucus committee within our party, which he chaired, which was shared by many people within that party, led to a paper being submitted to the government which formed a large part of the proposals which seemed to have found some favour with the member for Rosemont and the leader of the New

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Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent). I want—because it is now possible for me to do this—to pay tribute and express my grateful thanks, personally and on behalf of the House, to the member for Surrey-White Rock-North Delta whose work has led to this.

Mr. Speaker, there was something said by Madam Speaker today that I think all of us ought not to forget. There may be questions about what she said, but there is a phrase which I copied down and which I think none of us ought to forget. She said "We must review our parliamentary procedures" She was right: we must do that.

We have gone through an unprecedented period in the last little while. Those of us who in this House speak about a change of attitudes are right. It is because of the requirement that we be cognizant of our attitudes that I am not going to comment today on what was the most extraordinary speech, in the circumstances, by the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Pinard). It was a most extraordinary speech in the face of the motion which has been placed here, but I am not going to comment on that. I have been a government House leader, and the problem of being a government House leader from time to time is that all of us have to bear crosses, and we bear them all the time. So I can have some sympathy, in a way, with the burden that is put on his shoulders, because I carried some burdens as well. What we are trying to do here, I hope, by this motion is to change somehow the attitude in the House of Commons.

I want to suggest to my hon. friend that if there had been some follow-through by the government on the promise that it made in the Speech from the Throne two years ago almost—and now we are in one of the longest sessions in history—that we would implement changes in the procedures of the House of Commons, I dare say the atmosphere, the attitudes, and indeed this House itself, could have been profoundly moved in a different direction—had that promise been kept. I say as a parliamentarian that I regret—the strongest word I am going to use today—that the government has not seen fit to follow through with that proposal, which was welcomed by every member of the House of Commons.

Mr. Speaker, all of us here talk about short speeches or shortened speeches and it is probably a good thing that that should happen. But we have to make some changes in this House which are much more fundamental than that. And they are not just changes for the opposition. They are changes for Parliament. What has happened to this Parliament? Well, because of the onrush of business, because of the intervention more and more by government into the daily lives of Canadians, because of a whole host of things that we could number, each of us, on our fingers, government has come to assume and require a greater part of the parliamentary day in this House.

It follows from that that there has been a diminished role for the private member. The private member is sent here to represent his voters, whether they voted for him or not, for the time that he is here. This Parliament is more than just a rubber stamp, certainly, but it ought to be much more than