

*Summer Recess*

remains to us now is to do exactly what the Attorney General is doing, that is to defer everything to the courts. Now Parliament is not a court. Parliament is supposed to legislate. When the reports are tabled, when the proceedings are launched, we will be in a position to know what it is all about and to ask questions if we should probe deeper into some matters. However, this is absolutely not the case at present. This week, we had nothing but presumptions and innuendoes. How can we possibly have a serious debate when all we are doing really is to try to mark time, to show interest in an issue which does not concern us for the time being since it is before the courts. I am surprised that mature people who were members of the previous government cannot assume their responsibilities with more seriousness.

A moment ago I said that there were 30 of us when we started off. I see now that there are two members on the NDP side and four members of the Progressive Conservative Party. I am still thinking of the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) who was saying that above all we should not waste the precious time of the House. There are very few people in the gallery and not many members in this House. I think we ought to be more serious because if the people saw what is going on here they would be quite discouraged because we are not doing democracy any good. Quite the opposite. When we travel through our ridings and hear what people have to say about the institutions which represent them, there is no reason to be surprised to see how little respect they have for those institutions and even for parliamentarians.

The type of comedy—that is exactly what it is, I think—we have been witnessing for the past week does not do anything at all to enhance the calibre of the debates we should be having and above all does not contribute anything to restore the fame and the lustre of an institution such as Parliament. I for one am far from being proud to see the situation we have gotten ourselves into as parliamentarians because we did not want to co-operate and especially because we did not want to be reasonable.

● (1920)

We are the first to ask in the name of public interest that reason triumph over passion and that we have some parameters to guide us in certain institutions and certain conflicts, but when the time comes to apply such things to ourselves, I often have the feeling that we are unable to accept that kind of discipline. We may have a tendency to act somewhat childish as though we were in boarding school, but this is not the way to inspire the Canadian people with respect for parliamentary institutions. And I know that people of my own generation often have a tendency to smile when we speak about Parliament.

When I first came here myself, I had the impression that Parliament was much more serious than this. We must admit that we deal with serious issues, but the rule which gives us the

right to speak does not necessarily mean the freedom to abuse this right, even though the two are often confused. This does not restrict democracy but shows a certain discipline, and we should normally be able to do so as responsible people. It seems much easier to have good intentions than to do something concrete. What gets somewhat irritating in this House is the fact that they always want to speak, and even though I have taken 20 minutes to speak, I would have found it much more normal to be in my own region representing my fellow citizens than to repeat what has been said earlier and to say things which will be repeated later by members on both sides of the House, even though nothing will have been gained. I am certain that, sitting in his place, the hon. member for Vegreville is aware of this, and he should be free to say so, but I believe he is prevented from doing so by a mental restriction, because basically there is common sense on both sides of the House. However, there is always a tendency to say what we want to say and to ignore the rest. I remember one of my teachers who always said: It is better to keep quiet and be thought silly than to speak and prove it. I have the impression that it would often be better here if we kept much more quiet—

**Mr. Shields:** Why didn't you?

**Mr. Maltais:** Perhaps we should apply this principle on this side of the House, but perhaps it has been better illustrated this past week by the other side. That is the difference. What I want to say in closing is that we should amend our rules as early as possible during the next session, because I am told that the same situation has existed and the same things have been repeated for 114 years. I would prefer the party opposite to be much more progressive than conservative, because I often feel that the opposite is true now and that they are more conservative, more limited in their creativity and their imagination than able to do something positive to see to it that our rules are changed as quickly as possible.

I have to say in all honesty that it was perhaps a good thing a few years ago to have long debates and long speeches, but I believe this is no longer the case. What is important is to outline principles, to make the public aware of the regulations and to see to it that the opposition has the time to explain its objections, and then we can vote. That is a democracy. All the rest is talk and discussions which lead nowhere unless, as the hon. member for Rimouski said earlier, we do not want to have any contact with our constituents and prefer remaining in Ottawa to enjoy the weather.

I do not think that Members of Parliament in general want this. Most of them would like to go home. It seems to me that we have fallen into a trap much deeper than we could have imagined. The hon. members should now admit that the government had no other solution than to impose this motion of closure and finally draw the line so that we could go back to our ridings. I know that the opposition would perhaps have