

Business of the House

Mr. Hees: Mr. Speaker, I am very glad the hon. member asked that question because you can see that members opposite have suddenly become proud of their improved attendance in the House. Do you know what brought that about? It was the day we licked them in a vote.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hees: We beat them 44 to 42. It was only as a result of rubbing their noses in it that the Prime Minister and his cohorts are sitting here. They are so excited about this new attendance they want everybody to know about it. The hon. member asked why some of our members are not here this morning. The answer is the mismanagement of the operations of this House. This House was supposed to be adjourned last night to allow our members to make plane reservations—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Hees: The government should bring us back on the 21st, but it does not have the guts to do that. Bring us back and we will tell you what to do. We will put you in your place and we will get this country moving. Any more questions?

• (11:40 a.m.)

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): It is always a great pleasure to listen to the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings (Mr. Hees). After listening to him this morning, I really consider him to be one of the most progressive and enlightened members of this House—now that he is in opposition. I am sure we all wish he would have been as forceful and dramatic and interesting when he was Minister of Transport—

Some hon. Members: He was.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): —and when he was Minister of Trade and Commerce.

Mr. Hees: That was the only time your riding ever had anything done for it by Transport, and you know that damned well. I even put up with the hon. member's company for a full day in his riding to get something done for him.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): It is difficult for me to hear those pearls of wisdom. But he was saying, in effect, "those were the days". The night of the long knives, I think it was called, when the hon. member was so unkind to the person who at that time held the office of Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker: I assume the hon. member's remarks have been introductory. He should give some thought to addressing himself to the motion before the House.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): I have every intention of doing so. I was a little diverted at the outset. We have listened to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) give a recitation of the government's accomplishments, and the thought crossed my mind, knowing that the hon. gentleman is a modest and humble sort, that he left out a few things which ought to be placed alongside that record. Some of them Parliament learned about by accident and had no hand in developing or shaping. I am thinking in terms of the establishment of a secret police force in the

office of the Solicitor General, one of the accomplishments which the President of the Privy Council might have added to his list. I think, also, of the leakage of the Gray report, such a worth while document to make public, and the fact that so far no one has been able to find out who was responsible for drawing the attention of the general public to the more valuable parts of the report which was being kept secret by the government. The hon. gentleman might have listed the fact that the government eventually got around to making payments under the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act. There are many things of that sort he might have included; I do not wish to discuss them at great length.

Tomorrow sees the commencement of January, and of another year, too. This is appropriate. It may help us to understand how it is that the government can play both sides, take two courses and get the best of two worlds. January, Mr. Speaker, was named after one of the ancient gods of Rome called Janus. He was a god with two faces—he could see what had already happened and also, what lay ahead. It is because the government has two faces that it is able to say the things it does and get away with it. Surely, what we have heard this morning from the President of the Privy Council is not what we have been listening to from the government for so long, namely, that it could not get business through this House, that there was obstruction, that there was filibustering, that closure had to be brought in to get something done. It is because the government has two faces that it is able to say these things and get away with it. The arguments used about the obstruction, about delay, about putting blocks in the way of what the government was proposing to do in the public interest were proven false and phony by the President of the Privy Council himself when he talked about the substantial amount of government business which had passed through Parliament. I wonder whether he was, in fact, leaking the speech which the Governor General usually makes at the close of a session of Parliament.

I wish to take a few moments in which to indicate why I believe the government is phony and insincere in its attempt to deal with the problems confronting the Canadian people. In doing so, I propose to draw up a list somewhat similar to that which the President of the Privy Council read out, a list of items which the government obviously considered to be of extreme importance when it placed them upon the order paper but which have not been dealt with. There are quite a number of these items ranging over three pages. I shall not mention them all, because some of them are minor and technical, but I shall call attention to those measures which were considered to be of real importance by the government. If hon. gentlemen opposite really had any concern about the public business they would see that Parliament was brought back long before February 16 in order that it could deal with items which the government only a few months ago said were important.

Look at item No. 41, the report stage of an important piece of legislation relating to the Northern Canada Power Commission Act, a subject which has been examined at great length by the Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development. The bill has been reported to the House and a number of amendments proposed in an attempt to make government legislation better than it was