

The Address—Mr. Lalonde

listening to the Prime Minister's speech, a speech that shows he is more preoccupied with the form than the substance, I wonder when this foolishness will end. For instance, when shall we see the end of those unfruitful fights between the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) who says to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ouellet) that he does not know what he is talking about when the latter says to Mrs. Plumptre: Well done! even though 28 million of eggs are rotten. The Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) talks about powder milk, when it is not about beer advertisements. When will the folly end? The Prime Minister himself says to everyone: That is solidarity, that is democracy! And the people of Canada wonder where is the actual leadership. When will we finish playing games?

We could continue like that endlessly. I have already exceeded the time I was given. I would have a few more things to say. I hope I shall have other opportunities to do so. However, I am eager to hear the Minister of National Health and Welfare. I wish he would tell us about his policies as well as his campaign in Saint-Hyacinthe because we shall hear it with great pleasure.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for your patience and I hope that during the coming weeks the government of this country will actually try to govern our country.

[English]

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been some discussions about cutting to 20 minutes the length of speeches for the remainder of this debate. I do not wish to impose that limitation upon the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde), and of course it would not happen unless he agreed to it, but I wonder if at some point it would be possible for us to agree to limit speeches to 20 minutes for the balance of this debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order, please. The Chair has not been advised of such agreement. The Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) has the floor.

Mr. Caccia: Madam Speaker, on the same point of order, after the Minister of National Health and Welfare has spoken we would be agreeable to the proposal just made, in order that many more backbenchers could make contributions to this fine debate.

Mr. Horner: Madam Speaker, on the same point of order raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), I would not be so selfish as to say that when I have finished my speech, subsequent speakers should be limited to 20 minutes. However, I think the House rules are pretty clear on this point. In the debate on the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, speeches are of 30 minutes duration, and I think we should proceed in that way.

Mr. Basford: Who is the House leader over there?

[Mr. Wagner.]

Mr. Baldwin: We do not believe in mob rule.

• (1440)

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, first of all I would like to associate myself with all the previous speakers who have expressed their wishes to the Governor General during this debate. I would like to join in wishing a quick recovery to His Excellency. I am sure that all the members of this House hope that he will be able to resume his functions very soon and continue the excellent work that he had undertaken after his appointment a few months ago.

I would also like to join all the others who have congratulated the new Speaker of the House. I would like to assure him of my loyalty and wish him every success in his new duties. Finally, I would like to congratulate the movers of the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. I have heard and read their speeches and I must say that they certainly are to the credit of this House and of the government party.

Madam Speaker, I do not intend to take too much time in setting foot on the slippery ground of low-caliber partisanship on which the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner) has tried to keep the debate this afternoon. The voters of Saint-Hyacinthe gave their verdict on July 8 and, as we are good democrats, we must respect this judgment. All those who worked for my party, on that occasion, have at least the knowledge that they fought an honest fight in this constituency. On another occasion, I am sure that they will want to fight the same way again.

I would like to take perhaps a minute to comment briefly on the speech made by the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner). Almost throughout his speech I could see once again the reflection of the Progressive Conservative party in the sense that like his party he is always late by a couple of months, if not a couple of years. I listened to his speech and I told myself, the hon. member must think he is back on the hustings in Saint-Hyacinthe. But July 8 is passed, there was an election, and we know the results. Or still I could close my eyes telling myself, my God, I must have heard that kind of sermon when I was young. Then I remembered that it was exactly the same tone of voice as used by the bishops in Quebec some 25 or 30 years ago when they were talking to their people. The only difference is that the bishops have changed since.

Unfortunately, the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe following faithfully the Conservative tradition is still 25 or 30 years behind in that respect when he said that leadership was the problem during the summer election. The question was indeed solved by Canadians in a clear and firm manner on July 8 last. The hon. member raises again that question of leadership, as his leader did for that matter in the debate on the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne when he introduced the famous amendment that we know. I understand that the hon. member would want to talk about leadership, and that troubles him. In that area he may be considered an expert and with the problems facing his party I understand very well the aspirations that may torment him once again. I hope that this time he will have enough foresight not to know the