

function, or probably even a family argument. When we have family dinners I am sure we all get in to arguments now and again where we get pretty hot and pretty incensed at one another. Yet, even in those situations we do not lose it the way we lose it in this place, and here we are doing it in front of a national audience, in front of Canadians coast to coast. In fact it is not only in front of Canadians. I understand that Question Period in the House of Commons is used quite frequently in political science courses in most American universities right now. They are absolutely amazed at the way we have this free-wheeling debate with one another. They are stunned at the language and the actions that we use.

So I asked myself: Why is it that when you come here with the best intentions, when you say "listen, I am not going to get involved in the cut and thrust of what has been going on in this place" and you try to do your best to put forward constructive alternatives to government policy, you still sort of lose it? I have been reflecting on this point for a while, and I think that very few Canadians really understand what goes on in this place when we are debating.

The television camera is very selective in the way it handles the question and answer period or the debating period. It does not have a wide angle lens. It does not see the whole dynamic of the House. Also the camera does not pick up the situation where if all of a sudden you ask a specific question of the government on a specific issue and the government, the front bench, the ministers of the Crown, stand up and give an answer which has absolutely nothing to do with the question that was asked. We are here representing our constituents. We are in a situation today where many of our constituents are in deep economic pain. We have almost 2 million people unemployed. We have people losing their homes. Bankruptcies are at a record high level. When we as members of Parliament on both sides of the House go back to our constituencies, we are presented with the problems that our constituents are facing.

They demand that we put forward ideas and recommendations when we return to the House of Commons. They ask us to say to the government: "Listen, we have people unemployed. The reason they are unemployed is that there is a lack of capital in the market. Banks are shutting down their lending practices. We have high interest rates. We have a high dollar. The immigration department seems to be moving slowly". Whatever the reason, our constituents expect us to come back here and make the government accountable for its actions.

Government Orders

We can stand up in this House day in and day out and be presented with answers which are not specific. Sometimes the government will answer in a way which is almost like number gymnastics. It will take a question and twist it in a way that the question we put just does not make sense or is not logical. This engenders frustration. It engenders a frustration in the opposition parties that triggers this language reaction or this decorum reaction.

I have only been here for three years. Initially I was pretty frustrated and disgusted with the decorum of this House, but I am beginning to understand fully why people can lose it in here. When one is part of an institution which tends to exist in almost a remote state from the grassroots of the people one can become insensitive. One can project, not by design but by inadvertence, an attitude which seems to be uncaring to the people of Canada. It seems to be lacking in action. This is what frustrates the spirit of this country more than anything.

Day in and day out I hear from my constituents: "What goes on up there in Ottawa? Does anything ever get done? Is there no way that you can move this government to act? What does it take?"

Mr. Speaker, do you know that most Canadians today have given up on the institution of government? Not just government at the national level but all governments. They have given up on government because they feel that their words are falling on deaf ears. When we as members, as recipients of that frustration, hear that frustration being expressed to us, we would be absolute fools if we did not come up here and try to pass on that frustration to the government.

• (1240)

We need action on tax reform. We need action on trying to put people back to work. When day in and day out we are stonewalled, it engenders feelings of frustration on this side of the House. I think that this motion on decorum and language in the House is totally misleading. It is misleading because it is not addressing the fundamental problem in this House.

The fundamental problem in this House is one where the issues are not being addressed in a specific and substantive way. What is our fallback position as members of the opposition? If the hon. government House leader were truly trying to be effective as to how to reform this House, then he would have put forward something that would have caused a break-up of the bureaucracy that not only runs this town but now tends to be running this very House which is the ultimate representative of all the people.