

*Procedure and Organization*

try to buy a 20-second commercial from Walter Cronkite this afternoon to put in a plug for the importance to minorities of the basic rights we are now discussing.

I rise in this debate because I think we are discussing an extremely important issue. It is not my purpose to be offensive to anyone. If anything I say is offensive, it is inadvertent and unintentional. I hold the view that everyone, no matter how exalted he may be in his own view or the view of any other person, can learn something from somebody else no matter how humble that other person may be.

I believe that a great many people in this house, including myself, still have a great deal to learn about the traditions of parliament, its rules, what they really mean and their significance. I think it is ill-becoming for anyone, no matter how brilliant he may be, to stack up one or two years' experience—I have seen this happen in parliament—five or six years, or even ten or twenty against the accumulated experience of 700 years of parliamentary development under the leadership of the greatest men the English speaking world has known. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, this is a subject we should consider very carefully.

I wish to speak through you, sir, chiefly to members whose experience in parliament is limited. We should remember that we are a parliament whose collective experience is very short; we have only very few members who have served in this chamber for any length of time. Political life expectancy in this institution has been very short in the last few years. Therefore we should pay particular attention to other authorities who have studied this matter, lived with it and in some cases recorded their thoughts.

It is not my intention to be condescending. I am not in a position to take that attitude. My experience in this chamber is limited. It is true that there are many whose experience is even more limited. We should not think lightly of the responsibilities of being a member of parliament. We hold a great trust. We sometimes think too much of the honour involved, the stimulation of political victory, and so on.

• (5:00 p.m.)

We should not forget that each of us is here to represent, on the average, almost 70,000 Canadians who have no means of expressing their views on a subject which is perhaps of prime importance to them, namely the type of governmental system they are going to live

[Mr. MacLean.]

under, except through their respective members of parliament. It is our responsibility as members of parliament to serve minorities in our own constituencies. It is our responsibility to represent the people who have voted against us as well as the people who voted for us. It is our duty to speak for them and to represent them in a way which will bring them collectively the best possible government under the best form of government, which I believe to be the democratic form.

If I were to talk to members of parliament who had just been elected, I would recommend to them that the first thing they should do is read some good books on parliament and parliamentary procedure. As a start I would recommend Beauchesne's *Parliamentary Rules and Forms*. For many distinguished years, Beauchesne served as clerk of this house. I want to quote fairly extensively from Beauchesne, for which I make no apology. On page 16 of Beauchesne, fourth edition, in a general discussion of what parliament means, there is this statement:

We use the words "House of Commons" very often without pausing to reflect upon what those words mean. The word "Commons" means the people. This is the house of the people, sitting on both sides of this house; and on both sides of the Speaker are representatives of every constituency of Canada. Collectively those of us who meet in this Chamber represent all Canadians. That is our responsibility! That is our duty. Our rights are important only to the extent that those rights represent the rights of the people themselves. If the traditional rights of the members of this House are released, limited or arbitrarily curtailed in any way, it is not our rights that are of concern. What is vitally important is that in that curtailment of rights—there is a limitation of the rights—of the people themselves. The freedom that we have here to shape and guide legislation, no matter on which side of the House we may sit, is part of the very freedom which we cherish here in this country of ours. It is here in the House of Commons, to which all the people of Canada must look for just laws properly considered and properly made, that Canadians in every part of Canada must look for the greater part of their freedom and for the assurance of that type of government which will be itself an expression of the freedom which has come down to us through so many generations of sacrifice and of tremendous efforts.

We hear a great deal about the necessity for speed, Mr. Speaker. We hear that it is necessary to have speed in legislation and that we have to get a list of bills as long as your arm through in each session of parliament. I am the first to admit that government is becoming larger and is impinging into many more fields than used to be the case. As a consequence, there is a great deal more parliamentary business than there used to