

[English]

**Mr. Walter Smith (Parliamentary Secretary to Postmaster General):** 1. Yes. In response, a reply was sent December 2, 1976 to Mr. A. J. Reid, Treasurer of the Association, by the Manager, Customer Service N.B. and P.E.I. Postal District. The member for Fundy-Royal was also advised, in a letter dated January 10, as to the federal policy on restraint in spending which deferred until further notice extensions of letter carrier service into areas that are beyond existing route boundaries.

2. Two hundred eight.

3. Group box service is the only delivery system that the Post Office is able to provide, pending relaxation of the limitations imposed upon the department.

**Mr. Speaker:** Shall the remaining questions be allowed to stand?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. McKenzie:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. On January 24 I placed starred question 1453 on the order paper. This is the second time I have had to raise this matter. Starred questions are supposed to be answered within a reasonable time, say about two weeks. My question has been unanswered for two months. It is not a difficult question. Has the government bought a new Grumman Gulfstream executive jet or not? Surely it does not take two months to find out. I am entitled to an answer, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Goodale:** Mr. Speaker, as I undertook earlier, I have been pursuing the particular matter raised in this question. I simply point out that the hon. member's interpretation of the rules governing starred questions is not entirely accurate. but we endeavour to answer such questions, and others, as quickly as possible.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. According to the earlier understanding, the House will now revert to motions to consider the motion standing in the name of the Minister of Manpower and Immigration with respect to which the question has already been put. The minister has been recognized.

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, may we call it 3.08 p.m.?

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## HOUSE OF COMMONS

### MOTION UNDER S.O. 75C FOR SECOND READING OF BILL C-27

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Cullen:

That, in relation to Bill C-27, an act to establish the department of employment and immigration, the Canada employment and immigration commission and the Canada employment and immigration advisory council, to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act, 1971, and to amend certain other statutes in consequence thereof, five hours shall be allotted to the further consideration of the second reading stage of the Bill; and

### Motion under S.O. 75C

That, at the conclusion of the fifth such hour, Mr. Speaker shall interrupt any proceeding then before the House, if required for the purpose of this Order, and, shall forthwith put, without further debate or amendment, every question necessary for the disposal of the second reading stage of the Bill.

**Hon. Bud Cullen (Minister of Manpower and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, the longer one spends in the House of Commons, the more often one is reminded of the lament of Cecil Rhodes: "So much to do; so little time."

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** And so little competence to do it with.

**Mr. Cullen:** This is not a new concern of mine. Indeed, in moving the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne in 1969 I quoted with approbation an editorial appearing in the *Sarnia Observer* which read in part as follows:

The real threat to parliament isn't the possible danger of cutting off productive and informative debate on a measure, but the steady erosion of prestige by the tiresome speeches, lack of decorum, obstructionism and poor attendance in the House. The House of Commons is its own worst enemy and every time it aids its own weaknesses it chips away a little more of its own fabric.

As I said at the time my concern about the passage of legislation was that we were taking too much time, rather than too little, with our legislation. When we spend too much time and have so many speakers, do the speeches themselves lose significance? Invariably it is a judgment call that must be made about the amount of time that should be spent at any stage of a bill. For this particular bill I note that we have spent some 13 hours on second reading debate and we have heard 26 speakers from all parties argue for and against its proposals.

It seems to me that in order to approve or disapprove of it in principle, as we are doing at second reading, the time already spent and the time to be allocated under Standing Order 75C should be adequate. We have heard the opponents of this bill make the same arguments against its content, and those of us who favour its passage have stressed the good aspects of the bill. But surely there comes a time when a decision must be taken on the principle of the bill.

Close clause by clause scrutiny of Bill C-27 will take place at committee stage, there will be further debate on any amendments proposed by the committee at report stage and then we will have final reading. Many of the points raised by hon. members would most appropriately be dealt with at one of these other stages in the procedure.

In addition to the amount of time that has been, and will be, spent on consideration of the bill, we have the statements made by the member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie) that if all changes he wants are not made he is prepared to filibuster the bill at all stages. Given the time we have already spent on the bill, the time to be made available, one hon. member's threat to filibuster and continue a monologue, I feel it incumbent on me as the minister to take my responsibilities and ensure that this piece of legislation continues to move fairly and reasonably through the parliamentary process.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!