

It is quite possible that the government will close off debate on this bill in committee. The government is fond of closure, fond of stifling debate on controversial measures. I am thinking of the anti-inflation bill, the *Reader's Digest* bill, the medicare bill, and other similar bills. In those cases the government ended debate with closure. The guillotine prevented my speaking, took away a right given to me when I was elected. I listened to the parliamentary secretary talk about bludgeoning. They are masters at that. We in the opposition must guard our rights most jealously. We resent this strong arm, arrogant use of closure. There is no excuse for it.

● (2020)

We have had 16 hours of debate. Surely a bill so complicated and complex that not even government members understand what is going on and the implications of it should be given more time. If government members do not know, they will soon know because letters are coming in by the hundreds, stating that this bill is ill-drafted. It was brought in without any thought whatsoever. All we are trying to do is point out these faults and make constructive criticism so that what is a bad bill can, perhaps in the long run, become a contemporary bill, one that is acceptable.

In conclusion, it must be tiresome for members opposite again to hear the government being labelled arrogant—tiresome, but true. Again members of the government are proving they have little understanding of and less respect for the House of Commons. This closure motion on Bill C-83 is a disgrace. It is a disgrace to the government House leader, to the government, and to all members of this House.

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

**Mr. Alexander:** I urge prompt defeat of this guillotine motion.

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

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General):** Mr. Speaker, when I sit and listen to debates like this I often question my position with regard to capital punishment.

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

**Mr. Allmand:** This afternoon I did a quick check of the order paper. I found that there are 19 or 20 government bills at different stages presently before parliament, bills which should be passed before the end of this session or, as hon. members know, they will expire and must be re-introduced in a new session. These are important bills for the Canadian people. We as a government are committed to them and we want to see them passed as soon as possible. It is obvious that the opposition is not as enthusiastic about the bills as we. It is in their interest to drag out debate as long as they can. It is in their interest to delay the government's legislative program and make it look as poor as possible.

The government, faced with this situation, has two choices. It can either let the opposition run this House and control this parliament, or we can do it ourselves. If we do not take action to see that our legislation is put through this House in a diligent way, then I say the opposition will

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do it in their way. How will they do it? They have what I call the closure of the opposition. They have the closure of delay, the closure of repetition, the closure of obstruction, and the closure of just plain tactical interference. With that type of closure, instead of passing those 20 important bills before the House of Commons, we will only pass five or ten. I say that is just as serious. It is what I describe as closure by the opposition.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) criticized the government for putting this motion to provide ten days of debate at second reading, and he poses as an opponent of closure and allocation of time. However, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre did not hesitate for one minute in the last two weeks to introduce a motion to adjourn this House when it suited his own political purposes. That kind of tactic to introduce motions of adjournment, to refuse extensions of hours and to introduce frivolous motions to delay time in the House, is just as much a delay in time and obstruction, and a type of closure as this type.

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

**Mr. Allmand:** As long as the opposition insists on using that type of closure in trying to control this House, we will respond with reasonable rules and reasonable measures to put through our program of legislation.

There are other ways to get through the large volume of legislation that we must put through this House. We could extend the hours of this House. We could extend the sittings. However, I understand that each time we went to the opposition with that kind of proposal, they turned it down. I have been in this House time and again when the government House leader has asked for an extension of hours so that we could sit late to get in more debate and pass a bill, and was refused by the opposition. That is one way we could do it. I am sure our House leader would be pleased to discuss that type of extension of hours.

I also understand that the government House leader approached the opposition House leaders during this debate to see if they would accept some allocation of time such as seven days, ten days, or 15 days. They were not interested in any allocation of time. We asked for a suggestion, but they were not interested in an allocation of time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger):** Order, please. This afternoon I called the House to order. Each member is only allowed ten minutes to speak. It is difficult for the Chair to follow the debate when one cannot hear what is being said. I ask hon. members to allow the minister to speak and be heard.

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

**Mr. Allmand:** The hon. member for Waterloo-Cambridge (Mr. Saltsman) suggested that we were acting contrary to the spirit of parliament in introducing this motion. However, I do not know of any parliament under the British parliamentary system that drags out debates as long as this parliament in Ottawa. If we look at the parliament of Westminster we find that it is very rare for any debate on second reading to go beyond a couple of days. Further, if we look at many of the parliaments in our Commonwealth, very few of them go beyond a few days on second reading