

*Government Orders*

him how bad the environmental bill was and that is one of the ones it is proceeding with under this special order.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, it is wrong, it is unprecedented, it is improper, and the government should not be carrying on in this way. As the hon. member for Halifax says, it is pernicious. I quite agree with her.

He then says, and I quote again the parliamentary secretary who obviously does not know what he is talking about, on page 652: "It is part of our practice and to reinstate this particular bill at this stage is completely in order". He is talking about a bill that is going to be introduced under this motion when it carries tonight. I am sure the members who are not here now will reappear and vote to put these bills back on the Order Paper. One of them will never appear on the Order Paper because it is going to be deemed to have passed. That is what is happening with this other one.

The parliamentary secretary says: "Part of our practice and to reinstate this particular bill at this stage, that is the stage of having been passed, is completely in order and is consistent with what I have said earlier, that in fact what we are dealing with is not a cutting off of debate, but a continuation of a bill at a stage it was at prior to the prorogation of the House".

• (1720)

In all the precedents I looked at back to 1938, and I will lay a bet with the minister at any time, there was never, ever a case where a bill was put to the point where it had passed this House. Every precedent I looked at back to 1938, and frankly there were precious few reinstatements in the period, brought the bills back to no more than the completion of the report stage, or its former equivalent, completion by the Committee of the Whole.

In other words, there was always a debate allowed at third reading of every bill that was reinstated. But here in this motion today, we have a bill that is deemed passed by this House, so there will be no debate at any stage on this bill.

**An hon. member:** That is terrible.

**Mr. Milliken:** It is a national disgrace.

**An hon. member:** It is a travesty.

**Mr. Milliken:** If this kind of thing was reported in parliamentary journals around the world, the Canadian Parliament would become a laughing stock because of the outrageous conduct of the government in introducing this motion. It violates all the constitutional principles of debating bills at three readings in the House of Commons. That is the standard practice in every British parliamentary institution and has been for hundreds of years, and this government is violating that practice.

Who is to blame for this practice aside from all the members on the other side? The government itself had a choice.

They had a choice. Remember those words. Hon. members opposite may remember them because they came up in a debate. They had a choice. They chose to prorogue the last session and leave the business unfinished on the Order Paper. They sent us away through April and early May and said: "We do not want you in Ottawa. We do not want questions every day. We do not want to listen to you. We do not want our sins exposed to the people of Canada on national television here on the floor of the House of Commons".

They sent us home instead of sitting around and dealing with that business. They could have had us here debating Bill C-26. They could have had us here debating Bill C-58. They could have had us here debating Bill C-78. We could have debated Bill C-82, or at least the other place could have continued with it. We could have debated Bill C-85, but no, no, the government decided that we should go home. It got this House adjourned and sent us home.

Members went back to their constituencies and did their thing for a month. Then the government said: "Well, we are going to prorogue the session now". It did so on May 12, by proclamation of the Governor General, and brought the last session to an end.

We in the opposition had nothing whatever to do with it. We were never consulted. That was done by the government; it was its choice and at its time. It ended the session and thereby killed everything that was on the Order Paper.

**An hon. member:** Shame, shame.

**Mr. Milliken:** That is provided for in the law. The government is entitled to do it if it wants. We did not sit around and say you should not have done that. We said: