

*Time Allocation*

this Bill, and after his House Leader had informed our House Leader and the House Leader of the NDP that their legislative priorities consisted of a whole string of legislation and C-85 was not on any of the lists, except well, well down? After clear indications from the Government that Bill C-85 was not something they hoped to get through before Christmas, the Minister of Agriculture in the middle of an income tax debate stands up and gives notice under Standing Order 75C, in our opinion, totally wrongfully.

• (1540)

Admittedly, the Chair has made judgment on that and said it can be done, but I humbly suggest that it should be examined by the Procedure and Organization Committee of this House. Because if this, what only can be described as "sneaky behaviour" is allowed to become the practice and the norm and is accepted in this House, then the kind of day we had yesterday and the day before are going to become part of the norm as well. I am sure no one wants that.

What was especially sleazy about that notice was that it came within days of the Government House Leader indicating that the Government was certainly interested in parliamentary reform. They were going to co-operate with the spirit of reform, with the spirit of working together to make this institution more meaningful, efficient and effective. But within days of what we thought was a sincere statement of Government policy, we have the behaviour I have referred to from the Minister of Agriculture.

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I am not prepared at this point to suggest that the Government House Leader was misinforming the House. I strongly suspect the Minister of Agriculture was freelancing and for that reason we have not seen the Government House Leader in the House during any of these last few days of rather interesting procedural discussions, which one would think the House Leader of the Government would be very much a part of. I suspect that the Minister of Agriculture, having crawled out of that limb all by himself, was left there on the limb all by himself, and at this moment I do not see a single Minister in the House except for the Minister of Agriculture, which indicates that the rest of his cabinet colleagues do not really want a whole lot to do with him.

This issue of closure which we are debating now on this particular Bill is an affront to the House in the manner in which it was introduced by the Minister of Agriculture. It is an affront to the spirit of parliamentary reform which had been so enthusiastically endorsed a few days earlier by Members on all sides. It is an affront to very, very significant sectors of the agricultural community of this country who find this Bill, in its present form, offensive. It is an affront, Mr. Speaker, to listen to Members of the Government speak about the need for us to be unified, for Canada to work together, to co-operate to overcome the economic problems of this country on the one hand, and on the other hand for the Minister of Agriculture basically to thumb his nose at the major portion of the agricultural industry and say: "I do not care what you think. I want this Crown corporation and I am going to force it through even though I have to trick my own House Leader. I want this Crown corporation."

One wonders if he wants it for the benefit of a little red star on his report card, or for the prospect of there being another high-priced position within a Crown corporation which can perhaps be occupied by himself or his friends at some future date, beyond, as we know, the reach of any parliamentary scrutiny, as evidenced by the Auditor General.

And it is also an affront, Mr. Speaker, to do this just one week after the introduction of the Auditor General's Report on just how out of controls things are in regard to Crown corporations. The Auditor General described it as a hole in the taxpayers' pockets. Money is being spilled to the tune of who knows how much—we are not allowed to find out. No one can find out, not even the Auditor General. But within one week after that condemnation of the way in which Crown corporations are managed in this country, we have this Minister coming forward with closure to force through yet another Crown corporation, and who knows how many more subsidiaries of that Crown corporation are going to be created.

The socialists say a Crown corporation is a good thing and Parliament has no right to know what the Crown corporations are doing, how much they are going to be paid, that we have no right to say whether they can create subsidiaries or how many subsidiaries could be created. The socialists love Crown corporations. The more the merrier. And heaven forbid that the people of Canada should ever be allowed to find out how much these corporations are spending, how much the senior executives are getting, whether they are doing a proper job in fulfilling their mandate. Heaven forbid that Parliament should ever be allowed to investigate and find out. That is what the New Democratic Party are agreeing with. They agree wholeheartedly with that philosophy.

Well, we do not, Mr. Speaker. We accept and believe, and, indeed, have demonstrated that the Auditor General is exactly right, as his predecessor six years ago was exactly right, when he said there is a need for parliamentary oversight. There is a need for the public to know, through their elected representatives, just what Crown corporations are doing, because they are now, in terms of staff, larger than the Government, larger than the official Civil Service. They spend \$30 billion-plus per year. For the Minister of Agriculture to say we should respect parliamentary democracy and look to the Mother of Parliament, for example, and on the other hand continue to turn a blind eye, or, indeed, condone the kind of abuse which the Auditor General talks about, is an affront to this House and to this country.

These last two days, Mr. Speaker, were not the way in which I, or my colleagues, would in fact like to see this place operate. We would like to have Parliament be a Parliament in the traditional, classic sense, with some ability to find out what Government is doing, with the authority to control Government spending and to oversee Government operations in a real sense. We have been successfully denied that for years and years and years. The introduction of Standing Order 75C is an affront to this House which we simply cannot tolerate. If The