

Time Allocation

that the Minister of Finance does not believe in this bill. We know he is embarrassed by it. All we are seeing now is a way for them to avoid any further embarrassment.

It is very clear that we cannot allow this bill to pass this House until one very important condition is met. That is a condition that must be met on behalf of the Canadian people. How is the measure going to be paid for? We will have an opportunity of finding that out soon enough, we hope. That is one of the reasons why debate must continue.

We have no intention of denying the Tories their Christmas goodies or their presents under the tree, but we do believe that the rights of this Parliament should be recognized. We believe that this Parliament has the right to introduce amendments, to have those amendments examined thoroughly, and to have them debated properly so the Canadian people can see if there are better ways of delivering proper relief measures for property owners.

There is no one on this side of the House who has ever said that we are against relief for home owners. Our argument very clearly has been that we are in favour of relief for other people as well, and the excuse of the Minister of Finance simply will not wash. When he says there is simply no money to pay for these relief measures, we know the money is there in his own appropriations. He would not allow us to put those amendments forward. He would not give us the opportunity even to present the alternatives. He did not want to hear the truth. He did not want to see the alternatives, so he convinced his friend, the President of the Privy Council and Minister of National Revenue, who is in a cold sweat anyway over the Gallup poll, to introduce closure. That is the reason we have this motion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Axworthy: The fact of the matter is that we are suggesting—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Axworthy: I would just like to say, Mr. Speaker—

An hon. Member: Sit down.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, order.

Mr. Axworthy: I would just like to thank the minister and the House for its courtesy.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Speaker, in almost every debate during the last several years on a motion under 75C the second speaker has been the hon. gentleman who is now the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Baker). His comments on what he then called closure, and what he now calls an allocation of time order, make very interesting reading. I will not take the time to present them all, but I did enjoy what he said on March 10, 1976, when he started off in this way, as reported at page 11676 of *Hansard* for that date:

[Mr. Axworthy.]

Mr. Speaker, I listened with some amusement to the government House leader a few moments ago saying that he approached with reluctance this whole question of closure in introducing this motion at this stage. I hope he will forgive me if I suggest to him that his approach bore all the semblance of the reluctance of a vulture approaching a fallen deer.

Then, having used that colourful language, the President of the Privy Council went on to say that the action of that day was "treachery". Then he said it was "double treachery". Then he felt the exuberance of his own oratory and went on to say it was a "triple act of treachery", and "this is a black day for this Parliament and for this country". Those are the words of a few years ago of the President of the Privy Council describing the very kind of motion that he now presents to this House.

In his attempt to justify this act he tries to talk about this matter having been debated at great length. The hon. member for Winnipeg-Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy) has just pointed out that the debate in the important Committee of the Whole stage on this bill has barely started. We had a part of last Tuesday and a part of a short day on Wednesday, and that is all the time we have had on the clauses of this important Bill C-20. For the government to say that there shall now be only one more day's debate on this important measure makes this, in the language of the President of the Privy Council when he was on this side of the House, a black day for this Parliament, a black day for this country.

This is a very serious measure. As has been pointed out a good many times, it is not just a housing measure. In fact, it is not that at all. This is a taxation measure involving a cost to the treasury over the years of billions and billions of dollars. Many a time I have heard it said that this House has to take seriously its responsibility for the public purse. Surely in a matter like this we should be giving it the attention it deserves.

The government tried to tell us down through the piece that it would pay attention to our amendments and it was anxious to look at the matter with care during the Committee of the Whole consideration. Now in effect we are not to have any Committee of the Whole consideration at all.

One other thing that I want to emphasize is that there is sense to our rules that prevent things from getting through in a hurry. Even in this modern age of rapid communication it still takes time for ideas to get across the country and for the people of Canada to realize what is happening. I have seen instances in the past when governments of other stripes pushed measures through only to find a few weeks later, when the mail began coming in, that they had made a serious mistake. In my own experience it is only now that the mail is becoming heavy from pensioners, renters and from persons who own their homes and make mortgage payments or property tax payments but pay little or no income tax. They are beginning to realize that this measure provides nothing for them at all. There is no rebate, no credit, no money to persons who do not pay any income tax, even though they may be paying on their mortgages and are paying property tax.