

Government Orders

challenge what the government is doing with this motion and with closure on these bills.

• (1630)

In wrapping up, the point I wanted to make as best I could was that the government, through this motion, the use of closure, is actually ramming through bills in this House that should have had the proper time for debate and review. This government has really thrown out the window a great number of very important traditions that Parliament has established over the years. It just gives rise to more and more resentment for our form of government and, in particular, against the Conservative government that is in office now. I hope it can learn a lesson in this session of Parliament. If not, I hope Canadians teach the government a lesson in the next election campaign.

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls): Mr. Speaker, this particular motion before the House of Commons is a very interesting motion. As you know, everything that is done in the House of Commons is done by a motion. Somebody has to put a motion to do everything that is done in the House of Commons.

The House of Commons has evolved over the years as an institution with a procedural framework that is there for a particular reason. It is difficult to understand, I am sure, as people would wonder, why we have traditions such as the Leader of the Opposition being separated from the Prime Minister by two sword lengths. That is kind of difficult to understand in this day and age, or why somebody in the gallery is not allowed to take notes.

The traditions in Parliament have evolved over years and years and years. The procedure has its basis in the prorogation or the dissolution of Parliament. It is such because a Parliament has got to start and a Parliament has got to end. A Parliament ends with a general election. The adjournment of the House is usually made and then the dissolution takes place.

The Speech from the Throne, together with the budget speech, form the two main segments, the two pillars of the House of Commons and of every legislative body under the British parliamentary system. They are there for a reason. The Speech from the Throne calls members back to the House of Commons to tell mem-

bers why they were called back to the House of Commons. In other words, it outlines the government's legislative reason for bringing parliamentarians back here to Ottawa.

What becomes of the Speech from the Throne, and why would we call it a Speech from the Throne entrenched with its tradition of outlining a legislative program, if the government of the day in 1991, using its majority, says: "We don't need a Speech from the Throne because we are going to use our majority to bring back bills that were presented to the House last year, or the year before or the year before that"?

The Speaker has made a ruling. I respect that ruling. I would respectfully submit that if there is anyone who is really in a mood to condemn the procedures adopted by this Chamber, then the condemnation should be on the shoulders of the government of the day.

This motion now before the House is an historic motion, perhaps the most revolutionary change to the rules of procedure brought into this House at any one moment in time in our history. The government has said that: "We will take five bills that were before the House of Commons in the last session", which could be two years ago, "and we want them now brought into this House at third reading, at the committee stage. We want them brought in and we want them at the position they would have been if the House did not dissolve". That is what the motion says. In other words, it is going to bring back five bills in one motion and it is going to put them where they would have been if the House did not dissolve, as if nothing has happened.

What do we have? Let us take any of the bills. There is a bill to amend the Railway Act; a bill to amend the Young Offenders Act; a bill to amend the Crown Corporations Act; a bill to amend the federal environmental assessment process; a bill to amend the act concerning the port wardens of Quebec and Montreal; and a bill relating to certain matters of employees' pensions and labour relations in connection with the transfer of certain airports to local authorities. Montreal, that is Dorval, is being transferred to a local authority. Vancouver is also being transferred and so is Winnipeg and some other airport.