

*Procedure and Organization*

créditiste when the Criminal Code was under consideration, it was now necessary to force upon us, willy-nilly, a provision on closure which is as hateful as the present one and which although it is more concealed, more modern, would also be a weapon, a guillotine to put an end to the squawks of the members of the Ralliement créditiste.

Mr. Speaker, I do not agree with that allegation and if it were only for this reason, the government has not heard the last of us, because they are not being honest in making such insinuations.

Mr. Speaker, it is unacceptable to be criticized by some government members who never rise to speak in the house, who sit here doing nothing, who get their allowance but remain idle in parliament. In accusing members of the Ralliement créditiste, of the New Democratic Party or the Progressive Conservative party of talking too much when they are making every effort to fulfil the mandate they have received from their constituents, I believe those government members are going too far.

That shows you in what spirit the present government introduces Standing Order 75c. That is why I wish to congratulate the member for Peace River and his colleagues, as well as the member for Winnipeg North Centre and his colleagues, for not letting go, and showing the government that even though it has managed to muzzle its men, it will never manage to muzzle the members of the opposition, at least certainly not the members of the Ralliement créditiste, and I would like that to be clear. Past experience has proved that those two parties teach lessons to the two old parties. Indeed, all the members of the Ralliement créditiste, like the N.D.P. members, make it a point of honour, a duty to participate in the drawing up of legislation, and not in delaying it, to reject the government proposals, to amend or study them. To my mind, those members certainly deserve congratulations, and certainly not censure or the imposition of Standing Order 75c.

Mr. Speaker, I say that Standing Order 75c is unfair to those members who are in earnest about their role as members, and who want to fulfil their electoral mandate adequately.

The government will soon rise in defence of efficiency. The partisans of efficiency, of production, of profitability are having their fling today, under the boot of the Prime Minister. Nothing is left to chance. It is a question of anticipating everything, of regulating everything, of prescribing, if necessary, always on

[Mr. Fortin.]

the ground of efficiency and of output. The content or the quality of the bills matters little. What is important is the number of laws that we shall adopt to impress the Canadian people.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we maintain that it is the quality that matters rather than the quantity. This should not make you conclude, Mr. Speaker, that we are agreed to filibuster or to delay the proceedings of the house. That is not the question. We are ready to co-operate and we have proved it.

It will also be necessary, Mr. Speaker, to examine the content of the bills. One is right to oppose a bill when it does not contain anything or when it contains controversial measures. The government can certainly not blame us then because we perform our duty.

Under to the Canadian parliamentary system, the contents of legislation has to be controlled, imposed by the government and more precisely by the government members. In fact, no member, not even a government member, can move a piece of legislation that would involve expenditures. That is important in my opinion and that is why I come back to it.

So members of the opposition are fully restricted as to the presentation of bills. There is only one possibility left to them, which is nevertheless tremendous: To consider government proposals, government projects and then give them unreserved support, criticize them in part, move amendments or reject them completely. Such is our lot. In short, opposition members cannot avail or pride themselves of any serious move, because they cannot make any proposal involving the expenditure of public funds.

The opposition as it is now designed must necessarily wait for government initiatives before initiating constructive criticism on behalf of the Canadian people. The purpose of Standing Order 75c is to take away from the opposition the right of free speech with regard to government proposals. This is the way things are now.

Therefore, the sole asset, the only working tool of the opposition, is the time factor. For the opposition this factor is essential and basic. It makes it possible for it to study bills which generally are introduced at the last minute by the government for fear that they might be considered, that certain controversial questions might be let out in the open such as, for instance, the omnibus bill. The government is afraid that these subjects might be considered and scrutinized and that one or