finance ministers, it would be better if that bill were stood. But this produces a kind of mixed package. My friends to the right are saying that they are concerned about Bill C-87. Let us separate this and get things clear. Let us have the Tory caucus give some advice or instruction to their House leader, so that when it comes to meetings of House leaders we know what we are talking about. If they want not to go on with Bill C-87, let us find that out.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Nonsense.

Mr. Mazankowski: Follow the debates in the House, and you will find out.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): You know our stand. Don't play that game.

Mr. Nowlan: Comedian!

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I am usually here. I know what is going on.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): You have one foot on each side of the fence.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I know what is at the root of the opposition to the motion that is before us today. It is opposition to Bill C-84, to the capital punishment bill.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Nonsense.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Behind that is the notion that somehow, if the House is kept going long enough into the summer, that bill could be delayed.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): When the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton heard some retorts from the government side, he said, I think, that he was getting close to the bone, or something. Well, I am obviously getting close to the bone of the Progressive Conservatives. The issue is before the House. I would say that the other subjects, such as Bill C-87, are still negotiable.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: Is that right, Mitch?

Mr. Sharp: It has not been held up on our side.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): On Bill C-87 you have.

Mr. Nowlan: He is in the dark ages. He thinks it is only Bill C-84.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. There is a great temptation to turn this debate into a House leaders' meeting. Perhaps hon. members should come back to debating the motion before the House.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I had exactly the same thought, Mr. Speaker. Why do we not hold our House leaders' meetings on this floor? I submit that Bill C-87 is negotiable. But I submit, also, that with a number of persons on death row with execution dates set for the month of July, it is a reasonable proposition for the House of Commons to make a decision on Bill C-84 at least some time in the month of June.

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I say, again, that there is an agreement on the part of the President of the Privy Council not to apply closure to the second reading debate of Bill C-84. If we are not going to apply closure, we have two choices, and it is not for the government to decide; it is for parliament to decide. Do we get in all the speeches that hon. members want to make by debating the bill all of June and into July, or do we allow extra time in June and try to bring the debate to a conclusion so that parliament can make its decision?

I think the sensible thing to do would be to add extra time, and if hon. members still want to continue the debate, they can do so. One of their members down the line can move an amendment for a six months' hoist and let all those who have already taken part in the debate get in again. They can keep it going, if they want to; but let us find out whether there is any disposition to try to bring things to a conclusion before the summer months. I think the motion does this, and we are prepared to support it. We think it is a good idea, but we will continue to negotiate with the President of the Privy Council for dropping Bill C-87 so far as the period of time between now and the end of June is concerned, and the same applies to Bill C-68.

● (1540)

Although I have been a little hard on my Tory friends—

Mr. Mazankowski: Not hard, just wrong.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I have not been wrong. I have been around here a while and I know how things operate. The Tories are to be forgiven for being confused. Some of them are more concerned about Bill C-84 than others, and some are genuinely concerned about Bill C-87. But the issue before us in this motion is a very clear and simple one. I have stated it two or three times, but I will state it again. It has been clearly decided and agreed that there will be no closure on the debate on capital punishment, and everyone who wants to speak shall have the right to do so. So the simple question is this: Do we achieve that right for everyone to speak by carrying it on into the middle of the summer, or do we add some extra hours in June with the hope of getting a decision on that piece of legislation in this month?

There have been House leaders' meetings; this question has been discussed and we know that the extra time will be used for that. The other day, when one hon. member was speaking at second reading of Bill C-84, he complained because there was a proposal to sit extra time which was to be devoted only to Bill C-84. The President of the Privy Council asked him across the floor of the House if he would accept the motion if reference to Bill C-84 was left out and it was open for all government bills. Of course, he did not really answer that question. No matter how you put it, our friends to the right want it both ways. The simple question is, when do we want the time for the extra debate on Bill C-84 which hon. members want?