

*Government Orders*

vote on this particular motion, the five bills that are before us are going to be back into the process and system.

In a short time today, through this motion, the government has been able to abrogate a great deal of the responsibility and duty that a government in our parliamentary democracy is supposed to accept, or we were led to believe should accept, when bringing forward legislation. That has put these bills in a difficult and unfortunate situation. Of course we will continue to debate them in committee and in the House when they make their way through the various stages.

This is not really a great deal different than if the government was to introduce in one day a series of bills and by motion, through closure, pass all that legislation quickly in one day. Why bother having Parliament sit and debate and have legislation reviewed by committee? There is no sense, from the government's point of view, in bothering to debate any of this legislation at all. What we might get from this government is that we might sit two days a year: one day in the spring and one day in the fall, and that would be about it. I think what that really is doing is challenging a lot of the duties and responsibilities—not just of Parliament—but of the government of the day, to ensure that when it is the government's job to bring forward legislation that it is brought forward in a reasonable and timely fashion and the rules that we have got accustomed to in this House are followed.

As you know, the rules of this House are there for a reason, to give members of Parliament time to deliberate on various motions and legislation being brought forward by the government. It gives Parliament through its committees an opportunity to hear from various groups and individuals who have particular concerns or expertise in an area. By doing that, we end up with better legislation because it does give people in a particular sector, for example people who are affected by a proposed law, it gives them a chance to make their views known. There is that important public input into the legislative process that we would not have. That is why we follow some of those old-fashioned principles, and I don't think there is anything wrong with some of the old-fashioned ideas about how Parliament has run itself.

We know that there is a need to balance the demands and needs of modern government against time, especial-

ly the time that Parliament and parliamentarians need to debate and review legislation. Finding that blend is often a difficult course to follow. I suggest, though, that this particular case is an example where the government has not taken the opportunity to try to find that blend or that balance between a modern government and the demands, needs and responsibilities of Parliament.

When we see what the government of the day has done, I think it just adds more and more to the concern that many Canadians have that Parliament and the government rides roughshod over the concerns of many Canadians. It is no wonder that people would start to feel that way when they see and hear what is being done, particularly by this government.

I would hope that after the next election, when the New Democrats form the government, that these are not the kinds of rules or motions that we will bring forward to this House. These are the kinds of rules that have really led people to seriously question our form of government.

Many in this Chamber, and probably most Canadians, would appreciate some of the approaches and attitudes toward Parliament that members from all sides have had, but in particular, Mr. Stanley Knowles. He was an outstanding parliamentarian from our party who really gave most Canadians an opportunity to see what it meant when Parliament was run the right way.

I am afraid that the government today is not helping any of us in this House in attempting to defend the institution of parliamentary democracy in which we all participate, argue and defend. It is often very difficult to do when we have a government doing exactly as it is doing today. It is attempting to accomplish, in a two-day debate or within a few hours, what traditionally should have taken some time to ensure that the bills before us are given the time needed for a proper course of debate, a proper review in this House.

I am hopeful that as this session of Parliament goes on, as we have heard the calls from the government members opposite, from the cabinet ministers in particular, they are talking about a new non-partisan approach to dealing with the issues in this country. Hiding behind those words while using motions and closure, as the government is doing now in this Chamber, does not lend any effort to a non-partisan role and leads members on this side of the House, and I think rightfully so, to