

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. I am prepared to listen to a point of order, and I should like to hear that point of order.

Mr. Johnston: The hon. member for Algoma (Mr. Foster) referred to this House being in session in August. The House did not sit in August of this year. I am sure the hon. member would not want to leave that erroneous impression.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): That is a point of argument and not a point of order, although it is debatable.

Mr. Foster: Mr. Speaker, I apologize if I said "August". I meant to say October 18.

I have referred to two or three pieces of legislation which are waiting. There are many others, such as the legislation respecting reporting by petroleum companies on their profit picture. We have been castigated by the New Democratic Party and the Tories in the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works for the last two years, saying that there were windfall profits that weren't being reinvested back into oil and gas exploration in western Canada and the high Arctic. This legislation is before parliament waiting to be passed.

In this session we want to deal with the legislation concerning the Alcan pipeline, the largest project which has ever been undertaken by free enterprise in Canada. That important piece of legislation will be before the House within the next few weeks. If we do not move rapidly on this bill, we will not get to that important piece of legislation before Christmas.

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, in speaking on this unfortunate motion before the House, I should like to straighten the record with regard to a few things. The speaker who immediately preceded me has indicated that he feels the debate on Bill C-11 has been prolonged. Also he feels certain legislation is being held up.

An hon. Member: Right on!

Mr. Stevens: If that hon. member and other representatives on the government side feel that way, they had better take it up with their House leader.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stevens: They had better ask their House leader and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) exactly what went wrong following the March 31, 1977, budget.

I am sure hon. members will recall that the budget came in on March 31, and that there was a bill which was the forerunner to the bill now before us. I am referring to Bill C-56. It received first reading on June 15, 1977, and has not been heard of since. For hon. members opposite to come into the House and suggest the bill before us should be passed expeditiously is balderdash, and the Canadian public should be made aware of that.

There is a very serious thing happening in this House. This government, with a sad economic record to face, is determined

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to stifle debate in this House. On every occasion possible members opposite are stifling debate and refusing to allow hon. members to deal with issues that should be dealt with, as far as Canadians are concerned. The last budget introduced in this House which received a full debate at budget level, and on the bills arising out of it, was the Turner budget of June 23, 1975. In the debate arising from that budget, 51 speakers were allowed to participate and express their views.

On May 25, the then minister of finance, Mr. Macdonald, brought in a budget and, by coincidence, exactly 51 speakers were allowed to participate in that budget debate. The various bills arising out of that were passed by this House without undue delay.

The next budget was on March 31, 1977, and 56 speakers were given the privilege of participating in that budget debate. The government chose not to advance the legislation, Bill C-56, which arose from that. It touched on income tax amendments. At that time there was no budget debate.

On October 20, 1977, the Minister of Finance introduced a so-called statement in the House during the throne speech debate. As the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) stated, they telescoped two things: the throne speech debate and the budget debate. Bearing in mind that the House has not had an opportunity to debate the October 20, 1977, statement, to now turn around and use closure in order to cut off further debate with respect to Bill C-11 is unforgivable and must be resisted by members in this House. This is the only opportunity we have had to debate what was said in that October statement.

The last time we received an opportunity to speak on an income tax amendment bill was one year ago in November, 1976, on second reading. To suggest a year later that closure is necessary is another clear indication that hon. members opposite are trying to stifle and squelch debate in this House.

In 1975 there were government expenditures of \$26 billion and a deficit of \$1.1 billion. According to the statement of October 20 the expenditures have zoomed to approximately \$43 billion and the deficit is \$9.2 billion. Is there any question as to why the government wants this debate stifled? It does not want that information conveyed to Canadians in the form of a parliamentary debate.

If I had more time I would take the House through the inaccuracies in the various budgets that have been brought forth. If we compare the March 31 budget with the current forecast of the Minister of Finance, we will notice a change of \$2 billion in their estimate of the deficit Canadians will face at the federal level. On March 31 the government estimated the deficit to be \$7.1 billion, and now feels it will be \$9.2 billion. The government is urgently trying to prevent further information on this being conveyed to Canadians. To suggest that there are not enough provisions in Bill C-11 to debate is totally overlooking the fact that the bill includes some tax credits proposed by my party over a year ago. I am referring to tax credits of at least \$100 per person. Unfortunately those tax credits will only occur in 1978.