

However, that is small comfort when one considers what we are being asked to do. The bill was introduced in the House of Commons on February 17. Second reading began the next day, and it was concluded a little more than a month later on March 24. We in the Senate are being asked to do all this within a matter of days, not even a full week, which is unreasonable in itself.

What is much more fundamental, however, is the use of closure once again. I had hoped that my honourable friend would have had a complete change of heart, considering the meeting that he and I attended yesterday morning with members of our Committees Directorate. The keynote speaker, Professor Jackson, made a powerful presentation on the question of closure, and he pointed out that, since 1988, this government has used closure more times than it has ever been used since Confederation.

**Senator Perrault:** All governments combined.

**Senator Frith:** Since 1988?

**Senator Molgat:** He said 1988. We will have the transcript of his speech in a few days, but that is the note I made at the time. My honourable friend was right next to me and had the benefit of listening to the same speech. He should have been able to understand what an affront to the parliamentary system is the constant use of closure. It goes against parliamentary tradition, against the whole purpose of having adequate time for debate —

**Senator Perrault:** To quote John Diefenbaker.

**Senator Molgat:** — adequate time to think about the question and, very often, adequate time for people to change their minds.

If any senators present listened to what Senator Thériault said last night, there is good reason for a change of mind. Senator Thériault made very clear what the effect of this bill would be on the poorest segments of Canadian society. Debate enables participation by more people, and it also enables the maturation of ideas in the minds of those who listen. However, that cannot be done overnight in a boiler-pressure atmosphere. That is what is wrong with the closure system. It simply prevents the proper interchange of ideas between members — and not necessarily members on opposite sides in all cases, but within the whole group. When you impose closure, you restrict that interchange.

**Senator Murray:** Why did you not make a counterproposal, then?

**Senator Molgat:** You are going against the principles of Parliament. That is what is wrong with what is being done here, and what was been done consistently by this government. There has been an abuse of closure. There is no need to push things through at that rate.

**Senator Murray:** Make a proposal.

**Senator Molgat:** The House of Commons was prepared to take a full month. Admittedly, they used closure there, too, and that is wrong, but at least they had a month. Here we will have less than a week. That is not the proper way to proceed. I object to the use of closure once again.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I have the original notice of motion put by Senator Lynch-Staunton and it says six hours. The papers today mentions eight hours, and that is what I read. I think it is a typographical error.

**Senator Molgat:** My honourable friend is making the motion. What does he want?

**Senator Lynch-Staunton:** His honour has the original in his hand. Obviously, there is a typographical error or a printing error, and I move that it be corrected accordingly, and that we deal with the original motion that says six hours.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Shall I read the motion?

**Senator Molgat:** Dispense; it is painful enough without hearing it again.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

**Senator Molgat:** On division.

**Senator Frith:** On division.

Motion agreed to, on division.

#### SECOND READING

On the Order:

Resuming the debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Bolduc, seconded by the Honourable Senator Meighen, for the second reading of Bill C-113, to provide for government expenditure restraint.

[Translation]

**Hon. Jacques Hébert:** Honourable senators, I will let Senator Graham speak first because he is in more of a hurry than I am, it being understood that I reserve the right to speak again later.

[English]

**Hon. B. Alasdair Graham:** Honourable senators, the late Bruce Hutchison once wrote that the Canadian breed has never failed a single decisive test when the alternatives were clear; that whatever else it may lack, the nation is rich in sanity. That sanity has been much in evidence in recent months as the present government has played out another smoke-and-mirrors sideshow in the theatre of the absurd. Although the hysterical shrieks of the major actors continue to resonate from within, it is clear that much of the audience left at intermission.