

be losing their jobs. The mere fact that drilling rigs are moving out of Canada could mean 55,000 fewer jobs here in Canada. Yet, it is impossible to discuss the matter here in the House of Commons of Canada.

[English]

The government pretends that its program will make Canada secure in energy. Its program does the opposite and that is why ministers do not want to discuss it in this country. Their program makes Saudi Arabia secure, it makes Mexico secure, it makes Venezuela secure, it makes Texas secure, but it exposes to the ravages and uncertainties of the world, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and the province of Quebec. Those five provinces are dependent today for part of their oil on foreign sources.

If the government continues on its way and continues to push through without parliamentary debate the kinds of measures that are in this bill, then the province of Ontario will soon be depending on foreign oil, that cannot be counted on, to heat its homes and fuel and its industries.

We have here, Mr. Speaker, a deeply dangerous bill, an immensely complicated bill and one that involves confiscation by the Government of Canada. It is a bill that involves deep intrusion into the affairs of the private sector of Canada. It is a bill that is already driving small Canadian companies to take their savings, their jobs, their expertise and to leave this country. It is a bill that hands to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources that extraordinary power to interfere in the decisions made by investors across this country. It is a bill that demands debate in this House. If there has ever been a bill which required this Parliament to consider it, it is one which extends, to the extent that this does, the discretionary power sought by the government. Instead of allowing Parliament to debate this matter, however, this Government of Canada is gagging the House of Commons and is trying to stop the people of Canada from understanding what is at stake in this deeply damaging energy policy.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, we are opposed to the motion that has been presented by the government House leader because, in our view, this is not the way to run the Parliament of Canada. Whatever may be the views of the various parties or the various members of this House on Bill C-48, it is an extremely important one and it deserves adequate discussion.

The President of the Privy Council (Mr. Pinard) seems to be concerned that we spent as much time as we have already this session on the subject of energy. He must know, as all members of the House know, that this is one of the most serious issues facing Canada—indeed, facing the world—in this decade. If time has to be spent on the subject of energy and all its aspects, then I suggest that is quite appropriate.

I recognize the impatience that the government House leader feels about debate that goes on and on. I recognize his sense of frustration when he cannot get agreement from the

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two opposition parties to shorten debate. I should like him to know, however, that there are times on this side of the House when we are tired of some of the things we hear from the other side. We are getting awfully tired of the way in which the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) stands up, day after day, and tells us there is no real economic crisis in the country, that anything that is wrong is due to external forces, and that members of the opposition are wasting the time of the House in raising these issues.

There is nothing we can do about that, Mr. Speaker, but keep on raising the issues and keep on talking. I suggest, however, that for the government House leader to be in the position that because he is tired of hearing a debate on a certain bill, therefore it should come to an end, is not the way to run the Parliament of Canada.

I know that there are those who argue—and no doubt we will hear that argument in the debate today and probably see it in editorials, if the press comments on this day's debate—that there is a case for organizing and ordering our debate in this House of Commons instead of just letting it go on and on in some capricious way. I quite agree, but I suggest that when we have a rule that permits an unlimited second reading debate and when a debate starts that way, it is, in effect, changing the rules in the middle of the game for the government to make use of Standing Order 75C.

The government supporters would probably say that the rule is there to be used. I would remind government supporters that rules 75A, B and C were brought in back in 1969 after very extensive debate only by the use of the 1913 closure rule. Rules 75A, B and C do not represent the consensus of those who were in the House of Commons at the time those rules were passed, and they certainly do not represent the consensus of Parliament today.

I would also point out that every time any closure rule is used, either 75C or the old 1913 rule, it does damage to the atmosphere and the spirit of Parliament.

I use this opportunity once again to say that I believe we have to find a better way. The better way that I have in mind is one that I have proposed quite a few times, but I am going to take the opportunity to suggest it again today.

I believe that instead of this haphazard, ad hoc, capricious way of the government stepping in to stop a debate, the continuance of which it does not like, we should have a set up under which, at the start of the session, the government is required to give to Parliament the titles of all the bills it proposes to introduce. I think we should have the wisdom and maturity to agree that for most of those bills a time limit on second reading would be in order—say a time limit of two days.

There are two categories of bills on either side of that main body that I think we have to consider. There are some bills that are so routine, so housekeeping in nature, that they hardly need any time on the floor of the House at all. They could be referred without debate to committees.