

be possible under this closure rule to avoid any discussion from the opposition side of the house at all. Sir Robert Borden said it was an absurd position but Mr. Guthrie, a Liberal at the time, worked it out by saying that we might be met by:

. . . a minister disposed to go the limit—

How little Mr. Guthrie realized he was prophesying the coming of a certain minister. He suggested that a minister might go the limit:

—and the committee stage can be passed without a syllable being uttered on the opposition side in the way of comment on the bill.

I am trying to find where he spelled it out that the committee could do it in committee of the whole in a minute of time going from one resolution to the next. Mr. Meighen replied to Mr. Guthrie and these are his words as recorded in column 8258 of Hansard of April 22, 1913:

Does the hon. member really seriously say that a minister moving the second reading of a bill, who during the course of his speech moves the adjournment, is moving that adjournment after debate? Is that his position?

Mr. Guthrie said yes and Mr. Meighen's reply was:

I will leave the hon. member to rest in that absurd position.

I am speaking quickly, and I am not able to pick it up readily but it is here, the corresponding discussion of the situation in committee where Mr. Guthrie suggested that the government might abuse this rule by having the committee go from one clause to another without any discussion.

**Mr. Rowe:** Exactly what they have done.

**Mr. Knowles:** Mr. Meighen, Mr. Borden and others who were piloting the closure rule through the committee said that was impossible and that it would not be debate, that it would not be consideration, that under standing order 33 it would not be possible for one person only to speak and move the adjournment or postponement at the end of a speech.

**Mr. Rowe:** They never dreamed of 1956.

**Mr. Knowles:** How little Mr. Guthrie realized, when he used those words that there might some day be a minister prepared to go the limit, but he was uttering a prophecy that has been fulfilled in our day.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I urge you to consider this matter very seriously as I know you are and have been since you realized it might come up. There have been occasions in this house—I remember one particularly in 1948 when a predecessor of yours stood firm despite an appeal from the government side that a ruling be made the government's

way. I refer to the time when Mr. Golding, who was in the chair, was faced with our contention that a ruling he made was correct whereas Mr. Abbott challenged that ruling and eventually appealed it to the house. This is even more serious than that. The whole question of the rights of parliament, despite what the Prime Minister tries to say, is at stake; not just our right to speak but the practice of the majority by its superior numbers in declaring that black is white. It can, by sheer weight of numbers, be done, and I am still dumbfounded that the minister of justice in 1948 who said it was not our manner to do such things—

**Mr. Fleming:** 1946.

**Mr. Knowles:** Yes, June 18, 1946—is today asking this house to take on something which, it is clear to everyone, is completely out of order.

**Mr. Fleming:** How the mighty have fallen.

**Mr. Knowles:** Mr. Chairman, I realize my time has expired and with one sentence I will sit down. Another great Liberal, Frank Oliver—I call the attention of the hon. member for Athabaska to this because he is a great devotee of his—said that closure is not a blow at the opposition of the house, it is a blow at the rights of the Canadian people. When closure is imposed in this way, by the moving of a motion that is out of order—

**Some hon. Members:** Time—

**Mr. Knowles:** —it is a blow that strikes at the very heart of our democratic system.

**The Deputy Chairman:** Before the hon. member for Prince Albert speaks I had intended to state this to the committee. I think I am in a position to make the very difficult ruling which it is my duty to make. I am going to hear the hon. member for Prince Albert but I am going to request him to advise me of new material. The material that has already been submitted by the hon. member for Kamloops, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and the Prime Minister I have before me.

I am also going to indicate that perhaps I have been too lenient with hon. members on both sides of the house this afternoon in permitting what should be advice to the Speaker or the chairman on a matter of order to become a debate on the advisability of whether or not the motion should be passed, a matter which is not debatable.

Perhaps in order that I should make it clear why I say this to the committee I might point out that there is no debate on a point