

*Time Allocation*

● (1850)

**Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport):** Mr. Speaker, it was very discouraging to hear a speech like that and follow the Parliamentary Secretary on his cheap accounting of parliamentary time and how it is used.

We all believe—unfortunately the Parliamentary Secretary does not—that the House of Commons is a place which distributes information to the public because the public has a right to get it. The public after hearing different partisan voices, then makes up its mind. That is what this place is all about. It is not a place where you count dollars and cents to determine how long a debate should go because it is costing so much. It is a place, instead, from which the public can make up its mind about what is going on. The facts speak more than the empty, pathetic rhetoric of the Parliamentary Secretary.

In this debate, which was introduced in May of this year, not a year ago, not six months ago, but in May, in this Chamber on second reading we have had some 26 hours of debate and at report stage we have had some six hours and 24 minutes. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, is that an unreasonable length of time on a piece of legislation which, as the Hon. Member for Prince Albert (Mr. Hovdebo) has indicated along with others, covers some 27 pieces of existing legislation that will have to be changed as a result of this measure? Is it an unreasonable length of time to have 26 hours on second reading and only six hours and 24 minutes on report stage debate?

The sad and unfortunate fact is that when you are in government and you are embarrassed, you call closure. When you are in government and you do not know how to deal with the arguments of the opposition, you then bring in closure. In other words, when you run out of arguments and do not know how to deal with the arguments put forward by the opposition, you invoke closure. That was typical last Friday when we dealt with the question about why in an international agreement Canada is not defined in the opening clauses, not even included, while the United States is. This document mentions Canada and the U.S. all the way through. It was sad to see the weak defence which the Government put forward explaining why Canada had been forgotten in one of the major opening clauses.

**Mr. McDermid:** It has not been forgotten, and you know it.

**Mr. Caccia:** The Government is embarrassed, uneasy and will impose closure to move ahead.

The Government has forgotten to seek the advice and information essential to make sure this agreement is in the interests of Canadians. I refer specifically to the environment.

This agreement is a bilateral one. All the points which the Parliamentary Secretary made earlier would refer to multilateral, global agreements. This one is not one of those. When the talk began, the Canadian Environmental Advisory Council

raised a number of interesting questions and brought them to the attention of the Minister of the Environment (Mr. McMillan) and through him to the Government. For instance, it said that Canada's freedom to impose environmental regulations and to yield subsidies and tax incentives to pursue the social goals of a clean environment and sound resource management must not be restricted by any freer trade agreement.

Did the Government take any cognizance of that? It did not. Did it launch any study of this point? Unfortunately, it did not. The Advisory Council went on and made another point. It said there will be pressures to reduce costs. In the absence of uniform standards and inevitable enforcement there could be pressure from Canadian firms or firms wishing to locate in Canada to reduce the short-term costs of production in Canada by reducing expenditures for pollution control and for sound long-term resource management. Did the Government pay any attention to this point made exactly two and a half years ago? No, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately not.

The Advisory Council made another point in this paper. It asked whether a free trade agreement achieved either bilaterally or multilaterally would require Canada to adopt another nation's environmental legislative and management approach. Was that explored? It was not. We ended up, as in the case of pesticides, with a notion that we should harmonize our regulations with American regulations. We know who will harmonize with whom. It is not the bigger with the smaller, it is always the smaller with the bigger because that is the way harmonization works out.

I see you are getting impatient with me in terms of time, Mr. Speaker. There are three other major points—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** I am never impatient with the Hon. Member.

It being 6.56 p.m., the two hours provided for the consideration of the motion now before the House under the provisions of Standing Order 117 have expired.

Accordingly, under the terms of the Standing Order it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the motion.

Is the House ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Some Hon. Members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some Hon. Members:** Yea.