

*Time Allocation*

What the Government is doing to the children is disgraceful. It will be called to account. It should reconsider the fact that it is calling closure on a vital piece of legislation which should ensure the future of Canadian children through choice by parents in Canada. That is not what the Government has done. This Bill will impact on our children and their families. The Government has put the country into a strait-jacket and it should be ashamed.

How can the Government expect the population to be informed when it ensures that it will be uninformed? How does it expect the Senate to respond when it has not yet sent the Bill there?

We should consider why the Government has developed this jackboot mentality. It does not bring forward the kinds of Bills this country deserves and has demanded. Democracy has lost its meaning. Time allocation and closure are totally unacceptable.

The 40 witnesses who had one-half hour each to comment on the Bill at least had time to say that it is flawed. That committee stage terminated on August 24. Report stage commenced on September 15. There were 13 amendments, only one of which was accepted.

I may have had complaints about the Broadcasting Act, but at least the Minister had been open enough to act in a spirit to accept some amendments. The Chairman of our legislative committee was sensible and open enough to allow an extension of time in order to hear the groups. It is unfortunate that this was not reflected in the Bill and in the amendments, but there was at least a sense of democracy. There is no sense of democracy or understanding with this legislation.

Finally, at third reading three Members have spoken on this vital and key social policy. It just shows what the Government thinks about social policy. It does not know how to implement social policy so it will hide it by passing it quickly so no one knows what it involves. The Government's approach is sheer hypocrisy.

It may be sheer hypocrisy and the Government may believe that it can cover it up, but the election will give us a chance to tell the people of Canada that while the Conservatives may know how to package policies through public relations, they know nothing about content.

**Ms. Marion Dewar (Hamilton Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to this motion of time allocation, which is really a form of closure. It is a disgrace that this Parliament is being presented with a motion like this today.

Government Members suggest we do not want to get this legislation through because we do not care about children. I hesitate to say that there are members of the Government who have not read the legislation because if they care about children they would recognize that this legislation does not focus on children.

Members opposite say that this is progressive legislation, but they cannot stand to hear debate about it. They are concerned

about an open debate on this legislation. They restricted the number of witnesses at committee stage over a period of two days. Some 40 groups presented briefs and made representations to the committee, and the Government could not find one group in this country that supported the legislation.

These groups have done much research and study into child care, child development, public policy and family policy. Yet the Government could not find one group to support its legislation. The Government brought this legislation back from committee and allowed three Members to speak on what the Government suggests is historic social policy. There is no historic policy in front of the House. It is a cosmetic package that pretends to present a child care strategy. The Government is essentially allowing tax exemptions for people who already have child care. The Government is not looking after those two million children across Canada who are in dire need of child care.

I take exception to the suggestions by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and other members of the Government that as soon as this legislation is passed working mothers who are concerned about adequate care for their children will have that care available. That is utter nonsense and really misleads the public.

Not only did the Government restrict the number of people it would hear, it heard no one from Saskatchewan, the Maritimes or the Territories. Obviously, in its arrogant stance, the Government decided that these people were not important and that families and children in these areas did not count. I am sure the Government must have beaten the bushes to find someone who would support this legislation but was unable to do so. It could not find any group that would say this is good legislation.

In the 1984 election campaign the Conservatives said that there was need for child care policy. In a public debate the Prime Minister said that it would be a priority of his Government.

Let us look at how the Prime Minister considers this a priority of this Government. He waited until the summer of 1988 to bring forward legislation that he said was a priority. In the meantime, he was busy attempting to deindex seniors' pensions, he was deindexing family allowance, he was increasing the taxes on ordinary families and he was bailing out banks. He did absolutely nothing with respect to child care.

Then he rushed this legislation through in the summer of 1988, during the month of July when many people are on vacation and it is difficult to organize communities to have the kind of participation that something as important as this should have. Even at that it is not enough to cut off the ordinary people across the country. But what the Government is doing is refusing to allow a full and open debate on the child care legislation that has been brought before us.