

*Time Allocation*

It says: "You do not like what we are doing. You do not like why we are doing it. You do not like how we are doing it. Therefore, we will cut debate off. We will limit debate. We will have our way and no other." However, seldom have we seen this particular means, closure, imposed on such a petty Bill as Bill C-131. Seldom have we seen the Government so determined to act, and for what? Is it to reduce its massive deficit? Is it to cut the waste and extravagance which it created? Is it to get Canadians back to work? Is that the reason the Government is introducing this measure? Is it really to cut back on its massive expenditure?

The Government now has a deficit of between \$25 billion and \$30 billion. The passage of a Bill like this would give the Government an additional \$15 million, a mere pittance compared to the \$70 million which it spends on self-serving Government advertising to puff itself up. But it is not a pittance to senior citizens. I would very clearly tell Government Members and the Minister, if she had thought to remain in the House, that the \$15 million which she is grabbing from the senior citizens of the country is not a pittance to them.

The Minister for National Health and Welfare has told us, as she did in the debate following the introduction of the Bill, that it was up to senior citizens to lead the fight against inflation, yet the Government has just finished an orgy of self congratulation for having brought down inflation, for having brought it under control, as it said. If it believes that it has brought inflation under control, why does it think it is necessary to proceed with the Bill?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Miss MacDonald:** Perhaps, because of closure, we will never know the answer to that question. We will never know why it says one thing and does another. There will be no chance for it to explain—and perhaps that is the reason for closure, because it cannot explain and certainly does not want to make the effort. Therefore, we are left to wonder why the Government is proceeding with Bill C-131 and the other Bill in that unholy trio, Bill C-133. We are left to wonder, too, how Hon. Members opposite can actually support these measures taken against senior citizens and the women and children of Canada.

• (1520)

I wonder, when I look at this Bill, if it is only Members on this side of the House who through their actions are shown to represent the senior citizens of this country. I know that all Members in this House on both sides represent senior citizens, but obviously it is only the Members on this side of the House who feel they have to stand up and speak out on behalf of the elderly of this country.

The Minister said in her comments that this Bill was easily explained to the senior citizens of this country. I invite her to come to any of the senior citizen organizations in Kingston and the Islands and give them that easy explanation that she is talking about.

I wonder if backbenchers opposite who are standing up and supporting this Bill can really be unaware of the impact that it is making on the lives of the elderly in this country, the impact on those who live just on the threshold of the Guaranteed

Income Supplement, or who live just outside of it, but who are going to have to bear the burden of this particular legislation. Or is it because the Liberal backbenchers have been deceived by their leaders, by the people sitting in the front benches of the Liberal Government? Have they been deceived as the nation was so clearly deceived when the Minister of National Health and Welfare promised on November 4, when she spoke on national television, and I quote:

All social programs, that means in particular pensions and all benefits for children, will remain the way they are.

Well, they have not. She made that statement and in the next couple of days she moved to change it. Let us make no mistake. This Bill was conceived in deceit and it is being born in deceit. The legislation is a deceit and closure is a deceit.

Now, these may be deceptions that the Hon. Members opposite can swallow, but Members on this side of the House, Members in the Progressive Conservative Party, cannot swallow this kind of deceit which the Minister of National Health and Welfare is seeking to impose today.

**Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think it will be news to you or to Members of the House who are here today to find out that we do not intend to support this proposal of cutting off debate on Bill C-131.

I do not understand why the Government continues to force these measures on the public of Canada. I do not appreciate at all the arguments put forward, either by the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) on behalf of this Bill, or last week by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Gray) on behalf of the legislation which cut the incomes of public servants who are on pension.

I do not understand what it is that the Government is attempting to achieve. On the one hand, they claim, and I think quite rightly, that the amounts of money they are taking away from people are insignificant. An insignificant amount to the Government may not necessarily be an insignificant amount to an individual or to a couple trying to survive on an old age pension and some earnings from other sources.

It may well be—I say this but I do not believe it—that last year, when the Government brought forward the six and five program, there was something somewhere to justify it. That is entirely possible. I personally did not believe it then, and my Party did not believe it then. We still do not believe, even with the benefit of hindsight, that last late July and August there were conditions which justified the six and five program as it was laid before Parliament at the time, which resulted ultimately in the legislative changes to the old age pensions, to the superannuation fund and to Family Allowances.

Let us assume for the moment there was some reason. Let us be generous and think that perhaps last summer there were conditions which existed which justified that particular course of action being followed. Those conditions certainly no longer exist. By almost every single standard you can apply, taking into account every social and economic commentator who comments on the Canadian economy and the social standing of