

Northern Ontario Pipe Line Corporation

is indeed a black day in Canadian parliamentary history. The government has inflicted lasting humiliation upon parliament.

The moving of closure has been resorted to only half a dozen times since confederation, the last time being 24 years ago on April 1, 1932. At that time a Liberal statesman, the late Right Hon. Mackenzie King, applied these adjectives to closure, which will be found at page 1611 of *Hansard* of that date:

. . . the most coercive and arbitrary act of which a government is capable . . .

I wonder if the present Prime Minister has forgotten those words. It must be remembered that when closure was applied in 1932 it was after days and days of debate; it came only at the final stage; it came only after the house had gone through various stages of a money bill, in committee, first reading, second reading and then finally in committee on the later sections of the bill. It was only then that closure was applied after weeks of debate.

But here this despotic government announces closure in the opening speech by the minister introducing the resolution in committee. This is a money bill. The amount of money involved in the present bill is \$130 million, and the bill before the Canadian parliament in 1932 involved \$140 million. Yet the debate on that occasion ran to the final stages. Listen to these words of Mackenzie King:

I submit that the discussion of a matter of such colossal proportions and so all-important to the taxpayers of this country should not be restricted under closure within a day and a half of the time it has been entered upon.

He was speaking only of the final stage.

Action so extreme in character has never been taken by any British government in regard to public taxation. The action of the present administration reduces parliament in its most essential functions to mere futility and complete farce.

What would he have said if the government of that day had imposed closure in the opening speech of the minister introducing the resolution instead of weeks after that stage? We have seen today a gagging and fettering of parliament by the government, aided and abetted by every Liberal member of this house and now supported by the Social Credit. Every Liberal in this house has toed the party line today and this synthetic enthusiasm we have seen on the Liberal benches remains completely unconvincing.

The hon. member for Peace River has made reference to a filibuster. This debate started yesterday and closure was announced before the debate was even begun. Yet we hear talk of a filibuster. Did you ever hear

such rubbish as we heard from the member for Peace River tonight? Yesterday that same member was busy disowning the announced alliance in the province of Quebec between the Liberal party and the Social Credit l'union des electeurs. Now we find the same Social Credit leader, not only carrying his followers into the Liberal camp but actually engaging in a warm embrace. Politics indeed makes strange bedfellows. This is an extraordinary alliance between the Liberals and the Social Credit.

In the kind of mentality exhibited by those who have forced closure upon this house today we see an attempt to create a situation in parliament where there is no place for an opposition. They do not want an opposition. Yet I would remind you that the function of an opposition is of the very essence of our parliamentary institution. The minority in the house does not speak by leave of the majority. If that were the case it would be the end of the freedom of speech. No, the minority in a free parliament speaks as of right. What has been done today has been to deprive the minority in this house of their right. When you tamper with that right you are jeopardizing the institutions that have proven themselves the bastions of democratic freedom, and destroying the rights of the minority in the house. This is but a lighthearted assassination of free institutions, and it is perpetrated now by those who call themselves Liberals.

This stratagem was not given birth in any democratic mentality. It is the evil spawn of a fascist mentality. But assassinations always must be performed quickly. It was Macbeth who, on the eve of one assassination, said:

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly.

That is the mentality of this government. Having decided to perpetrate this assassination of free institutions, they decided that if it were done when it is done, then it were well it were done quickly. That is what their intention is now.

Is time of the essence? Well, they have let five years run by and, if their memories are so short, let me remind them that this house met on January 10 in this session, over four months ago. Even in his first speech of the session, the Leader of the Opposition called for the reference of this subject to a committee, in order that the facts might be laid before the parliament and before the public. This is a deliberate action now. No Cromwell could more swiftly and devastatingly have showed his complete antipathy to parliamentary institutions than the Prime Minister and his government have done here yesterday and today.