

*Proposal for Time Allocation*

Finally in this regard, as advocate for the plaintiff, as it were, may I say I dislike dictation. I dislike tyranny. I dislike the tyranny of a government which imposes closure. Equally I dislike the tyranny of members who use more than their allotted time to present their views over and over again, preventing other members from having their opportunity to speak. But having said that, Mr. Speaker, I must say that what the government is now proposing is the wrong move at the wrong time in the wrong way and for the wrong purposes.

The hon. member for Lafontaine (Mr. Lachance) who has just resumed his seat was one with whom I had the privilege of serving on the committee on procedure. Let me make it quite plain that what has been referred to as the allocation of time rule has no connection at all with what was proposed by this committee, on which I had the honour to serve some years ago. Any resemblance is purely accidental. I would certainly deem it a breach of privilege if I were accused of being in any way even part author of this particular rule. I would think the only way to find out who sponsored it would be to provide terms of reference under the children of unmarried parents act.

However, Mr. Speaker, as I say, this proposal is not an allocation of time. The allocation of time, as I construe it, is a measure which would not be used very frequently. The original proposal was one fairly mild in its application, and I do not think it would apply to too many measures. Those who promised us such great things are, I think, wide of the mark. But there are a number of measures we always have in every session in respect to which agreements made by the house leaders are not always observed, though not through the fault of the house leaders.

These are measures where it would be possible, through the agency and under the aegis of the business committee, to work out in detail an allocation of time, provided there is complete frankness on the part of the government in disclosing the legislation. I think that would have to be a condition precedent. I think it would involve as well a practice somewhat similar to that in the United Kingdom of filing all amendments to Mr. Speaker's ruling in advance of moving the amendments, ruling out duplications and those which are not in order, so we would know precisely what was involved in the debate and the areas which were controversial. However, I think it would be possible in some few measures to work out in advance an

[Mr. Baldwin.]

allocation of time, and I think the house would be appreciative of it and that it would do a great service.

This was the only intent of the committee on procedure when it proposed this step several years ago. It is my clear understanding that in respect to any step beyond that, the government must still be prepared, if it feels it has a good case, that it has the support of the country and it feels it must do so, to move closure, and to move it not under the guise of an allocation of time. That is their rights. If the government is justified in doing it, I for one would have no hesitation in supporting it in a proper cause. But the government must be very sure they are right, Mr. Speaker, and I suggest it is completely erroneous to exercise this right as they have done here, and to use the allocation of time rule at this particular period.

If the government is satisfied that this debate has gone on long enough, and if in the exercise of their discretion and in the carrying out of the duties and functions of the government they feel that they are acting in the best interests of Canada, then it is their duty to move toward and to impose closure, not this half-way measure which was never intended to be applied to a situation of this kind.

I know there are other members who want to follow me before the axe is honed and sharpened and put into the hands of the headman, but there is another reason that I feel very strongly about this, in spite of what I said at the beginning of my remarks. I think it is an issue which has been completely forgotten, and I think we should have the opportunity to discuss it in the course of this debate.

● (9:10 p.m.)

That is an illustration of the continuing growth by governments toward arrogating more power and more authority unto themselves to do by order in council, regulation and ministerial order in the dark recesses of cabinets and ministerial offices that which they do not dare do on the floor of the House of Commons. Lord Hewart called it the new despotism, in the form of anaesthetic.

We have talked about unification and integration. I will be quite frank and say that I oppose the government's action with some reluctance. I oppose it because involved here is the desire by the minister and the government to take unto themselves the right to change the structure of the armed forces of