

might have been completed today or on Monday. But, as I have said, the speeches were not long. It is the right, the duty and the responsibility of members of the opposition, on an issue of this kind where principle is involved, to say what they have to say on behalf of their constituents and the people of Canada generally.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baldwin: Having said that, I do not need to go any further than to say we intend to oppose this most improper and monstrous motion. Before concluding I would respond to the invitation of the President of the Privy Council with regard to abuse of the time of this House. I suggest to the hon. gentleman, as I have told him privately and in correspondence, that when we can restore to members of this House, on all sides, some capacity to challenge the government in an adequate way to deal with supply in the House—at least to the extent that some departments can be brought into the House and examined adequately—when private members have an opportunity to raise issues which can be debated, and that includes members on the government side, when there are supply days which are meaningful, when the opposition has some right to select the time when controversial matters of current interest can be debated, the President of the Privy Council should consider taking this blunt and useless weapon which was rammed down the throat of this House by the present Minister of Finance—the closure rules—and modify them so they can be used on appropriate occasions.

Speaking for myself, I would have no compunction about that kind of rule being placed on the rule book of this House. But there must be a *quid pro quo*. We must restore to this House the rights which have been filched from it over the last three or four years. This democratic process can only operate on the basis of a partnership between the government and the House of Commons. That partnership does not now exist.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, if instead of being limited to ten minutes I were limited to one word with which to describe this motion, that word would be “stupid”.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I say that the government's action in presenting this motion is stupid for two reasons. One of the reasons is that in my view there are better ways to deal with the management of the time of this House—and I shall say something about that in a moment. The other reason is that I am convinced that the effect of this motion will be that second reading of Bill C-58 will be attained in this House later than would otherwise have been the case.

If this motion carries and there are to be five more hours of debate, that takes it beyond tonight and over to Monday, so Bill C-58 will come to its second reading vote some time this coming Monday evening. I am satisfied that otherwise the debate would have petered out today.

● (1520)

Mr. Sharp: That is not the message we received.

An hon. Member: You sent the wrong messenger.

Time Allocation Motion

Mr. Sharp: You cannot have it both ways.

An hon. Member: There is no agreement.

Mr. Lawrence: We do not have to agree with you. The debate would have been over at five o'clock. This is stupid.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Although the time for the debate is limited, many hon. members can speak their minds. I hope that in the meantime hon. members will allow the Chair to hear the hon. member who has the floor.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I realize that the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Sharp) said that he had been told by members of the official opposition that they could not agree to time allocation and had a long list of speakers. According to my information—after all, we talk to our friends behind the curtains and we know what is happening—debate would have petered out this afternoon, or tonight at the latest.

The other reason for my thinking this method stupid is that there are much better ways of concluding a debate. I still believe in collective bargaining, in arguing things out until there is agreement. I know that in collective bargaining matters this government does not always stay at the table as long as it should, and the minister felt that in this instance he had stayed long enough. Let me remind him of two recent instances. I pick my words carefully, as I know one does not disclose secrets which are discussed at meetings of House leaders. Even so, I can remind the President of the Privy Council and my other fellow House leaders that when we met as a group on Thursday, October 23, we planned a program of business for the rest of that week and the next week until Friday, October 31. We got through that program of business, plus one more bill. We met again on Thursday, October 30, to consider a program of business from that day until Friday, November 7. What happened? Again, we got through all the items in that program, plus one more which we had not planned.

There are times when debate bogs down. What is wrong with that? This is the place of debate. There are times when members feel strongly about an issue and debate is extended. But I still think that the best way to sort things out is by sitting down and talking them through until there is agreement. In this case, I think that either agreement could have been reached or the debate would have died a natural death. So I say, Mr. Speaker, that this is a stupid method to apply to this issue. It is unfortunate, as well, because of the negative effect it has on efforts to arrive at some basis for managing the time of this House.

I make no bones about it: I have been involved in some pretty vigorous battles around here to do with closure. I was not here when Sir Robert Borden's Conservative party was in power in 1913—

An hon. Member: Are you sure, Stanley?

Mr. Dick: Check the record.

Mr. Lawrence: He came the next year.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): The hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) mentioned that Standing Order 75C, which we are now considering, was