

An hon. Member: We had to uncook the books.

Mr. Daudlin: Hon. members opposite forget those things when they say we are not doing well enough. We have done better than they, we continue to do better, and it does not take much of an effort to do better.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Would the hon. member not like to correct his statement? We were not back on April 3. It was April 14.

Mr. Daudlin: Mr. Speaker, I stand corrected. The hon. member will forgive a lapse. I was back in Ottawa on the third wishing we had already resumed, and I am certain I saw the hon. member in the halls on the same day. It has been suggested that we are rushing on to closure. The Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Collenette) pointed out that the previous House leader had taken some pains in a previous debate in December to indicate the difference between the application of Standing Order 75C and the closure rules which also exist. I think it is important that the people across Canada understand that distinction, but I ask hon. members opposite to do more than pay lip service to the fact that there is in existence that kind of a set of rules. They started today by admitting rather belatedly, and I think rather sheepishly, that while they were in government they said there is a distinction and a difference. When their own speeches are brought to their attention they have to admit that, but they still stand in their places and talk again about closure. If anyone has to come clean, it is hon. members opposite. I ask that they abide by the rules. If they want the rules changed, let us sit down and change them; but until we do change them let us use them effectively and do what we are here to do, and that is to see that the best interests of Canada are served.

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley-Hants): Mr. Speaker, I was very interested in the remarks of the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Daudlin). I note in passing that off the floor the hon. gentleman in a way is a personal friend of mine, but on the floor obviously and necessarily he is a political adversary, since we live in an adversary system.

The hon. gentleman talks about reform, but the procedure committee has not yet been structured. I have been on the procedure committee and that committee has tried to reform this House in a meaningful way for many years. There is a fear on the part of members of the opposition with regard to so-called reform coming from the government opposite. In the last number of years the government has had only a brief three months' experience in opposition. Our fear is exemplified by what is going on in the House today. Our fear is that reform will be chloroform to the rights and privileges of members of the opposition whose only real medium and vehicle for opposi-

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tion is rhetoric and the ability to stand in this House to make the odd speech from time to time.

There can be reform. In some debates the length of speeches should very well be cut down. Reference has been made by the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Collenette) to the English system. We all know that the mechanics of the rules of procedure of the unitary system in England are fundamentally different from those of the House of Commons of Canada. Canada stretches some 4,000 miles from sea to sea and the analogy of the unitary system does not fit.

● (1610)

Talking of *déjà vu*, I cannot imagine any precedent in history that would allow what is going on here today. There is a reason. It was not quite what the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) said, as I heard him, that the debate on the whole bill might very well stop. Certainly as far as this party is concerned, the debate on the motion would stop if the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) brought into the House of Commons a budget, so that members who wanted to speak on the budget debate had an opportunity to do so.

Mr. Collenette: Oh.

Mr. Nowlan: The Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council had a chance to speak. Frankly I was surprised at the list of numbers. I was away for a couple of days last week. If I was told that 24 or 35 members in opposition had spoken on this bill, their case might have been a little stronger. But for members opposite to take the Holy Grail now and wrap themselves in a shroud of sanctimonious rhetoric about delay and filibuster is the absolute height of hypocrisy after what they did to the previous government on the mortgage tax deductibility bill. That issue was debated during one election. The public of Canada had given a certain definition of approval for that issue along with other issues. It had been ventilated with the public.

The fundamental reason for a House of Commons, if one wants to go back to England and the days of yore, is to debate the power of the purse, not to pass mortgage deductibility bills and legislative bills. In terms of the analogy of England, it is just sad. The fact of the matter is that they have a wholly different unitary system. They bring in a budget before they try their allocation procedure. They have a five-year or a ten-year plan for financial estimates which is basic and obviously has changes. But the big thing they have in the federal House which we in this country do not have is that in the normal course of events there are changes in government, and the very change in government acts as a governor on what the new government will do. Remembering some of the frustrations of opposition, the new government will not be quite as arrogant or quite as indirect in terms of changing the rules.