

Time Allocation

world was going to collapse, and to see them raising their arms heavenwards like the chorus in a Greek tragedy, people must think this country is headed for a complete breakdown. Mr. Speaker, this is the worst display of bad faith I have ever seen. It is absolute hypocrisy, and I cannot believe my ears when I hear people talking about rights having been breached and our democratic system being attacked in Parliament. Imagine, since the beginning of this debate, more than 57 speakers have been given the floor during more than 20 hours of debate here in the House, and in the final instance, more than 22 hours will have been spent on debate and we shall have heard about 69 speakers. It is really unbelievable. As my hon. colleague from Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert) said earlier, the way the Members opposite are acting now is indeed an affront to our democratic system. They have found a new weapon to obstruct the proceedings, namely, by using up all allotted time to force us to impose closure. And when we do impose closure, they are all shocked and claim we are preventing Opposition Members from speaking in the House.

Mr. Speaker, just what is the proper procedure in any legally constituted assembly? For instance, in a company, if at a meeting one of ten directors does not agree, can he obstruct the proceedings indefinitely and demand that people listen to what he has to say all night long, or all week, because that is the democratic way of doing things? I do not think so, Mr. Speaker. At meetings, people have to finish their business some time. However, the business of the House that should have been finished before the House adjourned for Christmas has not been finished yet. Of course, the debate can go on and on, until the summer recess, and the business of the House can be left to stagnate, and this is how the Opposition is trying to give Canadians the impression that it is defending their interests and that they have nothing to gain if this Bill is passed, especially senior citizens, who they say, will have lost a considerable part of their purchasing power. However, in 1984, full indexation would have meant only \$50 more, I believe. So if we consider that by that time, the rate of inflation will have gone down, it is quite clear that people's purchasing power will not have been eroded at all.

The Members opposite are trying to give people the impression they will be in dire straits, that they will suffer and that they will have to tighten their belts. Well, on the radio at noon, it was said that according to an international Gallup poll, Canadians are the happiest people in the world—the happiest people on this planet, Mr. Speaker. Funny that 95 per cent of Canadian respondents said that they were quite happy with their situation, in referring to their jobs, their social life, and so on—95 per cent actually said they were very happy. We are the happiest people in the world. So, when a few moments ago, the Member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald) asked the Government why we were doing this, and whether it was going to create jobs or reduce the deficit, and so on, and when the Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans) asked the Government to take a serious look at the consequences of

such action, they could not understand how this measure would in the final instance benefit all Canadians. They are wondering why we did this. Mr. Speaker, we merely want to be consistent. We have already imposed the 6 and 5 policy on federal employees, and we know perfectly well this is not going to mean millions of dollars for the Government nor is it going to reduce indexing by 50 cents for all Canadians, but we do not want to give any particular group special treatment. It seems to me this should not be difficult to understand. Legislation is supposed to apply to everyone, and is not meant to please some people and upset others. So we must be consistent, and that is why we must take this action.

Mr. Speaker, pensioners are really not going to be affected the way people are trying to make it seem. Actually, pensioners who are now receiving the basic pension will be capped at 6 per cent, while those receiving the Guaranteed Income Supplement will receive full indexing. As far as family allowances are concerned, they will be indexed at 6 and 5 per cent. On the other hand, the child tax credit will be increased to \$343, which means that people in low-income groups will probably benefit from this arrangement. Canadians seem to understand this quite well, and they are not very worried, but the Members opposite are trying to juggle their figures and juggle people's feelings, with the result that they are spreading fear and anxiety among senior citizens. In fact, as was said earlier, this group has known poverty, the depression and the rest, and the Government is certainly not trying to breach their rights—on the contrary. We appreciate the work they have done for Canada, and we want to maintain, and if possible improve, their situation from year to year.

It is therefore clear, Mr. Speaker, that the duty of elected representatives and governments is to make themselves the voice and the agents of justice for the benefit of the community. The Government intends to proceed in this fashion and will continue to do so.

Since my time has now expired, I shall step down, as I see the Speaker is going to cut me off.

● (1620)

[*English*]

Hon. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, it is with no great pleasure that I rise to speak on this motion to invoke closure once again. It appears that it is becoming a regular habit of the Government to get all its legislation through the House by closure. I think it is particularly tragic that the Government seems to be moving a series of closure motions on a group of Bills through which the Government has decided—hard to believe as it is—who will suffer because of its mismanagement. Last week, it was the retired civil servants and retired Armed Forces personnel who were made to suffer. This week it will be the old age pensioners. I do not know who it will be next week. The Government may think of taking its troubles out on crippled children or someone else. However,