

Time Allocation

Before doing so, I wish to welcome back the New Democratic Party to the House of Commons who moved a motion to adjourn the House. They somehow wanted to convince everyone that they were really fighting this legislation. That was their intention.

Mr. Waddell: You were fighting for the oil companies.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): What they forgot is that the ditches and the trenches that they should occupy in terms of this debate are in the House of Commons and not outside boycotting their own motion.

Mr. Deans: Now the hypocrisy comes out.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): That is why the New Democratic Party has become known across this country as the prairie chickens.

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. That Party fought for 15 days for the oil companies but they are not prepared to fight 15 minutes for pensioners and civil servants.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, that is not a point of order and they know it. They should not further boycott and limit the work of this Parliament when we are dealing with a motion that they themselves say ought not to have been brought.

Mr. Deans: That is right and we refuse to help them. Tell the senior citizens what you really think of them.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): There have been approximately 30 speakers at the report stage over two days under the new rules of this House. These are rules which the Government House Leader (Mr. Pinard) said would shorten speeches. These speeches have been shortened at report stage by being reduced from 20 minutes to 10 minutes.

Why were they shortened? It was to allow Members of all Parties, whether Liberals, New Democrats or Conservatives, to speak on this matter. There still remain issues to be discussed, despite what the Minister says. Imagine, Mr. Speaker, in the face of shortening the period of time in which to speak, the Government has moved to allocate time.

I would be prepared to argue that when a Bill is absolutely necessary to implement a beneficial Government program there is perhaps a place for time allocation. However, can it be argued, with respect to a Bill which is designed to remove a benefit which has been contracted, paid for and relied upon by a large number of retired public servants, Armed Service members and retired members of the RCMP, as well as their widows and children, that it is honest and moral for the Government to move time allocation? That is the issue in this debate.

Let me say what the effect of this Bill is. Without any consultation, without a word to the Public Service, the Government has effectively increased taxation on those retired public servants and the broad public sector which I have mentioned by 5 per cent. That is the difference between the 11.5 per cent which public servants were entitled to under their agreement

and understanding over the years and the 6.5 per cent in the first year as set out in this Bill. It is an increase in taxation on a particular segment of society. It will be seen as that; it is that and it is unforgiveable to introduce such a Bill. It is equally and perhaps more unforgiveable to cut back on the right of Members to speak about it.

I want to say to the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Gray) and Members of the House that this is not the first time that the Government will use this measure during the course of debate on its famous six and five program.

Mr. Deans: I could have told you that in August.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): We will be dealing with Old Age Security. I do not want the NDP to boycott the House during discussion on Old Age Security. I want Members of Parliament and the public to know that the Government will do exactly the same thing with respect to Old Age Security. This will be an additional tax on the senior citizens in the country.

During the period for Members' Statements today, the Hon. Member for Eglinton-Lawrence (Mr. de Corneille) made a good statement when he said that Members should have an opportunity to be more independent. This is an opportunity for all Members of the Liberal Party to be more independent because the vote to close off debate in the House is not a vote of confidence. I say to the Liberal Members that they should stand up and vote against this motion. Your Government will not fall at 5.30 p.m. when this vote is taken. The Hon. Member for Eglinton-Lawrence should return to the House. I would ask him and every Member to have a conscience and vote against this motion.

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Hon. Member would answer the question as to why the Conservative Party would keep the bells ringing for the oil companies but not for the senior citizens, if they are concerned about this legislation. Can he answer that question?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): I think I should remind Hon. Members, particularly since I know that points of order were used earlier today as a mechanism to encourage debate, that it may be appropriate in the circumstances to remind Hon. Members to consider perhaps whether or not they are properly speaking on a point of order before they interrupt another Hon. Member. Of course, the Chair will recognize Hon. Members on a point of order.

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, as you noticed, the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) was taking his seat. I was rising on a point of order to determine if he was willing to respond to a question as to why the Conservative Party was willing to let the bells ring in the House for the oil companies but not for the senior citizens of this land.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I said I could answer the question if I have your permission and the permission of the House to do so.