

Time Allocation

elucidated? I ask why he found it necessary, and the members of his Government found it necessary, to muzzle the representatives of the people in advance of anything in the nature of a filibuster or an interference on the part of the opposition with the policy and program of the government. I ask him to explain that today, for certainly the day of silence is past. Are they afraid of the truth over there? Is that why they hide behind the caricature of Parliament which they have substituted by the adoption of the parliamentary form of closure in a way that it has never been adopted before?

Those were the terms Mr. Diefenbaker used in castigating the St. Laurent Government. What he said then is true today. The Government has not given the Opposition the opportunity to put before Parliament and the people of Canada the truth about situations with which it is dealing within these Bills, this in light of the fact that 50 per cent of the people of Canada did not vote for the policies which this Government is putting forward.

I go on to quote the words of Mr. Diefenbaker as follows:

Only once in history was it ever adopted in our country during the progress of a resolution, and then only after more than 10 days of debate.

What do we see with respect to the closure motion which is before us? Debate with respect to the Bill went on for eight hours—a mere eight hours. The Government then decided it should put forward its closure motion. What I am speaking about today is not the decision of the Government to use closure once but to use it six times in a matter of a couple of months. It uses it to force through legislation for which 50 per cent of the people of Canada did not vote. As 70 members of the Opposition here it is our duty to ensure that the people know that this type of legislation is being put before the House of Commons. They should know enough about it to put the type of pressure in place so that these measures will not be forced through Parliament.

In Mr. Diefenbaker's speech on the closure motion he finally made this statement:

Why not throw the key of parliament away? . . . Lock it up and throw the key of parliament away.

Those are the words of the Right Hon. John Diefenbaker with respect to what the Government of the day was doing. It is what this Government is doing today—what it has done six times in the last couple of months. This Government is muzzling Parliament. We might as well take the key and throw it away. The Government is locking the opportunity of Parliament with respect to placing information before the country and it is throwing away the key.

Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Lethbridge-Foothills): Mr. Speaker, I am really pleased today to rise to speak against the motion to refer this subject back to committee. I am glad to see that there are so many members of the Opposition here, in fact, more than were here to vote yesterday. There has to be a reason for that.

An Hon. Member: We are always here!

Mr. Thacker: I cannot be sure whether they are here to—

Mr. de Jong: Have you anything instructive to say?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rossi: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Bourassa (Mr. Rossi), on a point of order.

Mr. Rossi: On the other side of the House, a reference was made to the presence of Members in the House today, but let me tell you, we always have three times the attendance of the Conservatives, in spite of their large numbers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I do not think that is a valid point of order.

[*English*]

Mr. Thacker: I assume they are here because they do not want to work until 1.04 p.m. Perhaps that is the reason. If so, we would like to ask them to change their minds—

Some Hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Thacker: Why do we not work those extra four minutes so that the House can go on to the regular business at three o'clock? Are Members opposite here because they want to extend the day into the afternoon in order to pull a trick such as they did yesterday and waste the valuable time of the House and in so doing insult every Canadian who sent us here to work?

Mr. Angus: It's your closure motion.

Ms. Copps: You are on closure!

Some Hon. Members: Shush.

Mr. Thacker: I wish to address the comments of the Hon. Member for Cochrane-Superior (Mr. Penner) since he made some severe allegations. While he denied he was personally pressing the argument, he stated he has heard that the reason for pressing this Bill forward is so that the commissioners can conduct a gerrymander in the country. The Hon. Member for Cochrane-Superior acknowledged that he knows far better than that because the commissioners in this land are often judges, men and women of impeccable quality. What they did in my province before the last election was to start in the southeast corner and move through it township-by-township until they reached the average size of the riding. In this way they worked their way through the province. To make any allegation that the commissioners are doing a gerrymander does a severe disservice to the country.

Why are members of the Opposition opposing the passage of this Bill? It is hard to imagine that here we are in 1985 and the Constitution of the land declares that after each ten-year census, which was completed in 1980, there has to be a redistribution. After the census of 1980 the commissioners spread out across the country and returned with a proposal which would have given many more seats to western Canada. When one talks about raw, ugly politics, one will find it there. The Liberal Party did not want the redistribution after the 1980 census because it would have given more political power