

*Government Orders*

I speak almost with a forked tongue. That gets into the substance of the agreement I am glad to say is here today. It has to be put on the record that I am totally against the process. To have had the minister of Indian affairs speak for 18 minutes as he did in introducing this bill at second reading does not even begin to equal the 15 or 16 years it took to get the agreement. The member for Comox—Alberni said 20 or 25 years. I guess it depends on where one starts to define this very complex issue.

If there was ever an example of a dead Parliament doing dangerous things, this bill sadly is it. This bill should not have been brought in in the closing days of Parliament, the last weekend before we rise. Whether we come back, we do not know.

With all the good things the minister of Indian affairs and other speakers have said about it, this bill has the potential of nation building, of bringing the Inuit into the federation on some of the major points of the agreement.

The minister spoke this morning for 18 minutes. Then the government House leader stood up and used Standing Order 78(1) with the connivance and the complicity of the opposition and they are always railing against allocation of time.

However, an agreement of this size and magnitude should be in the public domain as a bill. The negotiations went on for 15 to 20 years, depending on the time frame used. Have that percolated and focused and then have people decide that perhaps something said in Parliament at second reading or in Committee of the Whole deserves further attention.

The rule is supposed to be used to move things along when there has been an excess of debate, when there has been obstruction. Yet we have had a horrible example in the dying days of this Parliament of the government using Standing Order 78(1) with the connivance and collusion of the opposition. In effect it says that the parties have agreed, yet other members who may not belong to political parties have not had a chance to speak out for their constituents or for other people in Canada.

We know from the history of this Parliament that this party has had no credibility on constitutional matters. There were three parties that agreed to Meech Lake some many years ago. In effect that went down the drain.

More recently we know the three major parties all got together on the Charlottetown accord. Three or four of us spoke out in a negative way on the Charlottetown accord and we were unable to get a vote then. Under the rules it is well known that five members are needed to provoke a vote and look what happened to the Charlottetown accord. The parties, the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell and members of the three major parties, all went one way on the Charlottetown accord for the greater good of Canada. Yet the people of Canada had some misgivings, to put it kindly. The people of Canada said no to the Charlottetown accord in a referendum.

That is another reason that a government in its dying days to exercise Standing Order 78(1) to close off debate on something of such magnitude and importance to the people involved is not doing justice to the issue.

• (1250 )

That is why I certainly agree with the point of order that was raised in a very short period of time. Under the rules we cannot get into debate when Standing Order 78(1) is used. The member for Beaver River did raise a point of order about the process. I had just stepped outside; I was on the phone. I came back in and found out the government House leader had used it.

Members of the opposition, whether Liberal or the NDP, are always protesting with vigour how they have been raped by allocation or closure. Yet when they are not gored they will get into bed with the government. It was never intended to be that way. This is the second time in the last month the government has used Standing Order 78(1).

The earlier matter, and certainly the one I was associated with, was the Elections Act which affected all members. They were able to use it because there were only four or five members in the House.