

Government Orders

large institutions. Go away, little interveners. Go away environmentalists." There is no money provided in the bill for intervener funding. It is an absolute disgrace.

The essence of democracy in a modern state is that third parties must be allowed to come forth and complete the process of investigation. All the power and knowledge does not solely exist within this House, it exists in thousands of communities across this country, people who have deep knowledge. They have to be provided with funding. It is the way to operate a modern state. The fact that this government refuses to do it is one more proof that what we are seeing on the opposite side is simply the finest 16th century thinking that the world has ever generated.

When we take power in two years, I can guarantee that no member of Parliament will have to stand up and wonder if the water that he is drinking is safe.

Mr. Speaker, you are asking me to sit down and I am certainly going to bow to your will, but let me simply say that Bill C-78 is a very flawed piece of legislation. Defeating the bill would not leave a legislative vacuum. Unfortunately, Bill C-78 is weaker than the existing guidelines which have subsequently been strengthened by court decision.

My feeling is that if we have to go with Bill C-78 or none, go with none. Go with the existing guidelines that were introduced by a Liberal government.

[*Translation*]

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, this government should recognize, as we all do, that this legislation will create more problems than it would solve. This bill should immediately go back to the drawing board. The environmental assessment principle is so important that it would be harmful to continue to examine such a half-baked piece of legislation.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to participate in this debate today, but I must say that I am getting rather tired of having to deal with closure and its effects, and the way that this government mistreats the precedents and the practices of this House.

An hon. member: A new definition of democracy.

Mr. Milliken: A new definition of democracy, as the hon. member says. That is what this government is trying to introduce to Canada. Frankly, I think it is time we exposed the fraud that it is trying to perpetrate on the people of this country by moving this kind of motion today and then closing it. I suggest it is perhaps one of the worst outrages that has been perpetrated in this House in many years.

I want to deal with the propriety of the motion that the government has introduced. I suggest that it is contrary to all the practices of this House for the last 124 years. It is a breach of the proprieties of this place. While the Speaker has ruled that the motion is in order, and I respect that ruling, I suggest that it is still morally wicked of the government to proceed with this motion and particularly then to apply closure to the motion and thereby curtail the debate on it.

What the government is doing by this, and let us make it perfectly clear what is happening here, is short-circuiting the legislative process on five bills. On one of those bills it is doing something that I suggest is completely unprecedented—frankly, the whole practice is unprecedented—and that is declaring the bill to have been passed by this House. In other words, tonight, when the vote occurs on this motion, a bill will be deemed to have been passed by this House which has never been introduced or debated at any stage in this session of this Parliament.

I suggest that this wrong. It is wickedly wrong. It is a gross violation of the constitutional principles on which this House has operated on since Confederation. Indeed, it is contrary to the whole practice of British parliamentary tradition for 900 years. Nothing like this has ever been tried before. I suggest it is wrong. The government knows it is wrong.

That is why there is not a single minister in this House showing his head. They are so disgusted and ashamed of what they are doing that they have all run for cover in the lobby or into their offices. I suggest that it is their obligation to be here and listen to this debate. They should be ashamed of their actions. I see every one of them has fled.

I want to thank the three members on the other side who are here to listen to this debate. I think it is wonderful that they are participating in this way.