

Extension of Sittings

House where they can use their parliamentary majority to push through legislation on which, that by rights, the people of Canada should have an election before it comes to the House.

I urge the Government to reconsider the importance of the parliamentary calendar to individual Members, to Members who have families, from the point of view of democracy as a whole. We want intelligent people to be able to stand for office. When intelligent people look at the manner in which this Government is demeaning the process of democracy, having a process of legislation by exhaustion, having a process by which individual Members of Parliament are denied the right to be with their families during the summer, they will simply say: "This is not for me".

I urge the Government to consider the fact that it will be in opposition itself and will not want this type of precedent to be forced back on it, to consider its own history of opposition to this type of jackboot tactics, and to consider the basic process of democracy. If it does that, I am sure it will withdraw this motion.

• (1510)

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of State and Minister of State (Treasury Board)): Mr. Speaker, I had not intended to speak because I had made a speech in proposing the motion. However, I have been moved by the "Government is bungling everything" speech of the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) and the "I want to get to the swimming pool" speech of the Hon. Member for Cowichan—Malahat—The Islands (Mr. Manly).

I want to say that we did not bring in closure without a great deal of thought. In fact, we regret the necessity to close this debate, but here is the situation with which we were faced, and I wish to refer you, Mr. Speaker, to the *Debates* of last week.

On Monday of last week from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. the House was delayed by the delaying tactics of the NDP. When one of their Members moved to introduce a Bill, half the Party said "yea" and the other half said "nay" and thus forced a vote. They did the same thing with respect to the question on whether or not the Bill should be printed. Unfortunately, that was a Bill to confer on Raoul Wallenberg honorary Canadian citizenship. We objected at the time, as did the Liberal Party, to the NDP playing politics with that very important matter.

On Wednesday of last week from 3 p.m. until 6 p.m. the House Leader of the New Democratic Party introduced two Private Members' Bills, forcing votes on the introduction and forcing votes on first reading, thus delaying away the entire day.

On Thursday of last week it was a short day because of the speech by Helmut Kohl, Chancellor of West Germany. The NDP did the same thing and delayed so that the whole day was wasted.

Thus Members of the New Democratic Party wasted two full days and one-half day last week. They now come in here

and talk about legislation by exhaustion. They cannot have it both ways. If they delay and delay and do not allow for debate, then one cannot say: "Well, we are not getting our opportunity to debate".

My hon. friend from Ottawa—Vanier said that we should have moved earlier last week to do today what we did. I want to refer my friend to the precedent in this matter which occurred back in April of 1987. I want to refer my hon. friend from Ottawa—Vanier to some of the comments of the Speaker when he made his ruling that it was within the rules to move, during Routine Proceedings, that the House move to Orders of the Day.

The Speaker made reference to the fact that the fundamental rights of Members can be violated by the tactics of obstruction as well as by unreasonable restriction of debate. He said that sooner or later every issue must be decided, and that the decision will be taken by a majority. The point to remember from the Speaker's decision is this. He said that he did not make the decision with a great deal of joy, and that the decision was made in such a way that if Member's wished to refer to it in the future, and if it was to be resorted to as a precedent, then the Chair will interpret it in the light of prevailing circumstances with a view to maintaining the essential balance to which the Chair referred earlier in its decision.

The reason we did not do this last week was to give members of the Opposition an opportunity to see if they had made their point by delay and delay, by not allowing the House to do anything. Obviously, they had not made their point. We just did not feel that it was appropriate to waste any more time of the House. They wasted two and a half days last week. We felt that the circumstances were there to bring into effect what the Speaker said was a precedent that cannot be abused.

We allowed for the delay last week. When the time of the House was being abused, that is when we brought in the motion to move to Orders of the Day.

My friend from Ottawa—Vanier quoted at length from the first letter of a series, that is, the letter of May 31, which I wrote to the two Opposition House Leaders. He took great glee in referring to the large number of pieces of legislation that were referred to in that letter, some of which—and this is admitted—had not even been introduced on the Order Paper. What my hon. friend forgot to talk about, which I will do for him now, is the letter of June 9 from myself to the Opposition House Leader.

Ms. Copps: I have that one right here.

Mr. Lewis: Have you got that one?

Ms. Copps: Right here.

Mr. Lewis: That is fine.

I want to point out that in that letter we referred to 11 Bills on which there is a great deal of agreement between the