

regard. As a matter of fact, he himself has tabled a working paper on the reform of our rules. I have read this paper with interest. It contains excellent suggestions. I do not agree with all of them, but as I have already stated, I intend to reintroduce several of them at the appropriate time.

However, until this desirable reform has occurred, it seems to me that we should all try to be reasonable and to limit the length of our speeches by using personal discipline. This would shorten the length of debate and while not preventing Parliament from sitting since it will sit as long as it does now in any case, it would allow Parliament to better reflect modern realities and assume its responsibilities in many areas instead of spending an undue amount of time in debating specific bills or issues.

I believe that the opposition could meet these objectives if it showed more discipline—and the same applies to the government—and it could debate and raise issues it considers of particular interest if the length of its speeches was limited to allow a greater number of legislative measures to be debated. I suggest that this would not penalize the opposition because the House would be sitting at least as long as it does now, and this institution would be able to play its true role, to show its respect for the Canadian people and to prove that it can be effective and worthy of their confidence.

● (1550)

[English]

Hon. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, the government House leader is so reasonable in his approach and in his words that he reminds me of a female black widow spider who, after she has attracted the male and gets him to mate, devours him. If we were to listen to the siren talk of the government House leader, that is what would happen to us. We would be devoured.

It is very significant that the government House leader said during his remarks that the government could no longer tolerate going on with further speeches on this borrowing bill. The government does not want to tolerate an opposition. It is intolerable to the government that there is an opposition in this House and that the opposition wants to discuss this bill.

This bill involves authority for the government to borrow \$14 billion. It is objectionable not only for that reason but because it also wants authority for \$3 billion of that amount to continue on beyond the end of the next financial year, to continue indefinitely in case the government suffers from contingencies. The government foresees some kind of a \$3 billion contingency for which it wants to retain authority. This has not been done before, at least not in my experience in this House. This is why we object to the bill, and we want to discuss it thoroughly.

The government has invoked closure on four occasions since it got re-elected on February 18. On June 9, 1980, it invoked closure on a borrowing authority bill. It borrowed \$12 billion just six months ago. The government got final approval in

July, and it used closure. On October 23, 1980, the government used closure on the constitutional resolution. On January 13, 1981, the government used closure on Bill C-48, a part of the government's new energy policy which is ruining Canada and which is foreclosing our economic prospects. Today the government is using closure, for the fourth time, to get approval to borrow \$14 billion. That is a disgraceful and shameful record. Disgraceful and shameful is putting it mildly.

The minister says he wants this through the House so he can get on to other pressing and urgent business. Is it not pressing or urgent to the government that the people of Canada should have full information on what the government's financial policies are or what its economic policies are?

We are opposing this because the government has given no program to the Canadian people to overcome our present economic morass. We have not yet had any true budget. We had the budget that brought in the new energy policy of October 28, which is a complete disaster. The Economic Council of Canada has pointed out that it stops our chances for economic growth in the 1980s.

We are opposing this because of the government's absolute lack of concern for the consumer or for lower-income Canadians. We are opposing this because the government is allowing gasoline and oil product prices to burgeon, despite their promises during the campaign a year or so ago that they would not allow prices to go up at all.

We are opposing it because of the lack of candor of the government. Neither in constitutional matters nor in financial matters is there any candour.

Just look at this. Here are the solemn commitments the Prime Minister made in the economic and financial field just last year. On January 19 in Vancouver the Prime Minister said, and I quote:

Liberals believe that we should use all the instruments at our disposal to try and stem the tide of the coming recession.

That commitment was made during the campaign, but the government has not used one instrument at its disposal to try to stem the tide of the recession. We have been in a recession ever since they reassumed office. There are 945,000 people out of work today. The government has not used one instrument, much less all. The Prime Minister has forgotten that promise.

He said in Sudbury on February 2:

We the Liberals would not try to set one province off against another. We would have responsible negotiations with the provinces and we'd work out a price.

That was an absolutely false statement. They have spent their time since February 18 setting off Ontario against Alberta, setting off east against west, setting off the centre of this country against the rest of this nation. There have been no responsible negotiations to work out a price for energy.

Other commitments made by the Prime Minister have been broken. Do you think we are going to approve borrowing authority of \$14 billion for a Prime Minister who is so lacking