

Government Orders

the window on the industry. Therefore, he has no trouble with the privatization of Petro-Canada.

I wanted to publicly thank Mr. Lalonde for his endorsement this morning. Since he has returned to the private sector, he has started to see things in much better perspective. I want to thank him for that publicly today.

In closing, I want to say once again that we feel, because we could not reach agreement with the opposition parties to manage the business of the House in respect of Petro-Canada, that we did have to bring in time allocation to allow today and tomorrow for debate. Then we will have the vote tomorrow so it can go on to a legislative committee.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to take part in the debate on the time allocation motion moved by the Minister of State for Privatization and Regulatory Affairs, but nothing more. I believe I made this speech a number of times in this Parliament and I regret having to do so once again. The minister has introduced a motion to limit debate to only two days, today and tomorrow. These would be the third and fourth days of debate on this bill, and that is not enough. The minister knows that full well, and I think the government has taken a dictatorial approach as to how the business of the House is to be conducted.

[*English*]

I am going to continue to expound on the theme because I feel it is time again to expose the government for its shocking approach to Parliament and parliamentary debate.

The minister says agreement could not be reached, as though agreement was somehow necessary in this kind of debate. Surely, on a bill that is opposed by the opposition, there should be a reasonable time for debate. Yet what is the record on this bill? We have had two days of debate so far. Four hours and ten minutes is the total time that has been spent in the Chamber debating this bill. We have the government saying it is time to draw this to a close.

Four of our members have spoken. That is four members out of approximately eighty in the Liberal caucus who have had an opportunity to participate so far

in the debate on this bill. Yet, the government now takes the view that it is time to close off debate.

I must protest this in the very strongest terms. In my submission it is improper for the government to be constantly using this rule. The Minister of State for Privatization says to look at the British experience and we should follow that. This House is not the British House. This House has different traditions from what the British House has. The tradition has been to allow for freedom of speech and freedom of debate in this House. This government is intent—I could use other words—on limiting debate at every opportunity.

I would like to go through the list of closure and time allocation which we have suffered in this Parliament at the hands of this Draconian and uncaring government. It is really a disgraceful record. We have had closure applied, and I am referring to closure under Standing Order 57, 13 times in this Parliament to date. We have had time allocation applied six times and today is number seven. Bear in mind that when time allocation is applied, it often can cover two stages of a bill at once, that is, report stage and third reading. In fact, that is exactly what has happened. I am not counting those as double whammies. I am only counting those as single episodes. That is six times without counting them twice.

Let us go back to the list. I invite members to listen to the list of bills that this has been applied on. First, there is the free trade bill. It was closed at every opportunity in the first session of this Parliament and it was also moved on a motion to suspend the rules in relation to that bill. Second, it was applied on the Unemployment Insurance Act, Bill C-21, at second reading, report stage, third reading, and then on the Senate amendments. Third, there are the Excise Tax Act amendments in Bill C-20. Closure was applied at second reading. There was the Plant Breeders' Rights Act with closure at second reading; the Advance Payments for Crops Act, closure at second reading; Bill C-28, the clawback provisions of the Income Tax Act, closure at second reading and time allocation on third reading and report stage; Bill C-49, the Resumption of Government Services Act, closure at second reading; the Goods and Services Tax, closure at second reading and time allocation on report stage and third reading; the Crop Insurance Act, closure at third reading; the Borrowing Authority Act, time allocation at second reading; the Restraint of Government Expendi-