

executive branch of Government to decide. It is a parliamentary question.

When have we ever proceeded with the question of redistribution without seeking agreement among the Parties in the House? That agreement is central to the parliamentary process. We do not use such a heavy, powerful weapon as closure on a measure that is parliamentary in nature and not related to the program of the Government.

I would tell Hon. Members opposite that they should call a halt to this because they are doing themselves great damage. Do Hon. Members know that there are now suspicions that the reason they are bringing in time allocation on this redistribution Bill which they want so badly is that they want to do some gerrymandering? Yes, I have heard it said that they want to appoint these commissions and have them re-arrange the ridings in such a way that it will somehow be to the advantage of the Conservative Party. I am not making that allegation right now. However, I am telling Members opposite that I have heard it. It has come to my attention, and people have asked if that is what the Government is up to. People have asked why the Government is not allowing Members of Parliament to speak their minds on something that is as important to every Member and every constituency as is redistribution. They are asking why the Government would bring in time allocation on a Bill like that.

There are suspicions that what the Government really wants to do is to remove all of the returning officers in all of the ridings so it can extend the patronage system into every constituency with the appointment of new returning officers. I have heard that allegation. I am not making it but I am telling Hon. Members that it has been brought to my attention. People are asking if that is what the Government is up to. I mention these allegations simply because I appeal to Hon. Members opposite to get some control over their front bench.

Let time allocation be used responsibly. The Standing Orders exist for a purpose. There are Bills on which the Government has every right and justification to use time allocation, and I will say so when I believe that it is right. However, in the case of Bill C-74, a very serious mistake is being made. The people of the country will not like it. We in the Opposition say it is wrong, and I ask if there is some way that this can be reconsidered. Is there some parliamentary tactic whereby we can withdraw this time allocation measure and have a full and complete debate so we can reach an agreement as to how the electoral boundaries could be redistributed? We must move by consensus and not by having a decision forced upon us.

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I rise to spend a few moments speaking on time allocation. In the process, I must remind Government members that many times in the past, they were riled at the sitting Government because of this measure. In fact, I believe a Liberal Government once lost power because of time allocation.

My predecessor, the Member who represented Prince Albert before me, was a very great parliamentarian and had a very

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great deal of respect for Parliament and what it stood for. He made hundreds of statements about the strength of Parliament, and I believe it behooves us all to spend some time reading what he said before Parliament, what this Government is denying. On May 17, 1956, the Right Hon. John Diefenbaker made a speech before Parliament regarding the process of closure. I would like to put on the record some of the things Mr. Diefenbaker said at that time because they were right at that time and they are right now. The Party that put those statements before the House at that time is denying them now. He suggested the following:

—by the application of closure in the way in which it was effected, not for the purpose of interfering with unnecessary debate but rather designed to secure silence—

He went on to say:

—and to use Parliament as an institution in which the government may produce what it will, is able to propound any proposition it likes and, because of its majority here to know that, regardless of whether or not there is any support for it, the majority will carry it through.

That is exactly what we are facing with this Government. Regardless of whether or not it has the support of the country in bringing something before Parliament and forcing it through, it will use its majority to force it through.

I wish Government members would remember that even if they do hold 211 seats, only 50 per cent of the people voted for them. A good portion of those people voted for the Conservative Party not because they wanted Conservative policies but because they wanted the Liberals out. They should remember when they are putting things before the House, passing Bills and using closure that they do not have the support of the majority of the people. The majority of the people did not vote for their policies and in many cases did not vote for the policies which they are forcing through the House by using closure.

I go on to quote from the words of Mr. Diefenbaker who was speaking of Mr. St. Laurent at that time, but what was right and proper then is right and proper now. He said:

—that the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) should abdicate his belief in democratic principles and deny those in opposition the right to advance their arguments and to educate public opinion or to find out why there is such solicitude on the part of the members of this government.

Mr. Diefenbaker recognized the responsibility of the Opposition to educate the public. The only way that the 70 members of the Opposition can educate the public is to have the opportunity to debate the Bills which come before the House in order to show the people of Canada that the Government is using its massive majority to stifle knowledge—to stifle the flow of information to them. We abhor this type of approach to legislation, that is, the closing off of debate and the withholding of information from the people of Canada just so that the Government can get its particular ideology through the House, an ideology for which 50 per cent of the people of Canada did not vote.

● (1200)

I would like again to quote Mr. Diefenbaker who said:

I ask the Prime Minister today to tell this House why he is so fearful of the facts; why he was afraid to allow the true facts of this nefarious scheme to be