

There appeared to be no end in sight. I think the record should be corrected to show that with respect to that bill a mighty filibuster was mounted by the opposition.

An hon. Member: Because the bill was so bad.

Mr. Simmons: I too, am anxious to have the record corrected, Mr. Speaker, in case my figure was wrong. It was only my third day in the House and the debate did not seem to me to have gone on for very long.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. I regret to inform the hon. member that his allotted time has expired.

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I want to say something about this closure motion. It is not simply a procedural matter in my judgment and I do not look upon it as inconsequential. I do not think that Standing Order 75c is simply to be used for the convenience of the government. I think it is a bad policy when the government decides to use closure after a limited debate.

I began by saying closure was never intended to be simply a convenience; it was intended to be used if, as and when a debate had gone on at great length and there was some essential time constriction. Closure was never intended to be used to permit the government to do what it otherwise could not do.

I want to suggest that if the government had brought in its budget and indicated its fiscal intentions, if it had shown what its economic policy was going to be, then we might have expected the government to bring in a bill asking for permission to borrow money in order to facilitate expenditures during periods of slow revenue growth. But that is not the case. This government has been in existence for only 16 weeks. The House has been in session for only eight weeks. We are talking about a piece of major legislation. Just because it is a short bill containing two or three paragraphs does not in any way make it of no consequence. This is major legislation. This is legislation that speaks to the very heart of Parliament. This is legislation that speaks about the right of government to go into the marketplace unfettered and borrow money. This is legislation that is asking Parliament to say to the government that the government has the right, without ever telling Parliament for what use the money is to be put, to go and borrow and to repay in any currency. I repeat, to repay in any currency. This is major legislation.

● (1650)

An hon. Member: Read the estimates.

Mr. Deans: We cannot read the estimates. There is no budget. There is no policy. There is no economic direction. There is no fiscal policy. In fact, there is no responsibility at this point in terms of the government.

During the debate I said that if the government could tell us that it intends to bring in a budget some time in the fall, why does it not just ask for six months of borrowing? Why does the government not come to the House of Commons and ask for

permission to go into the marketplace any time between now and October, if you wish—choose a date—and borrow up to 50 per cent of the total amount of the expected requirements for the fiscal year? Then the remainder could be sought after the budget is brought in and Parliament has had an opportunity to pass judgment on the appropriateness of the government's fiscal and monetary intentions. That would make sense.

I can recall a debate not at all unlike this debate, in a minority government in another place, debating the requirements of that government's intentions to borrow, and limiting that government to a period of time that would require it to return to the legislature—in this case the House of Commons—to seek further borrowing approval. This procedure would allow the House of Commons and those who are elected by the people of Canada to pass judgment not only on the appropriateness of the further borrowing, but on the appropriateness to which the borrowing that had taken place was put.

I think that is fiscal responsibility and is not asking too much. I think that every member in this House knows from the debate that has taken place outside among the people of this country that the public are very concerned about the government's unfettered spending, about the government being able to borrow without any evident sense of responsibility and accountability to the House of Commons. I do not delude myself. I understand that the House of Commons has very little power over the way in which the government spends money, particularly in a majority government situation. I also understand that there is a requirement on all of us to pass some judgment about the government's expenditures. There is a requirement on all of us to rise in our places and take part in the debate, and to offer suggestions as to how the government should or should not spend the tax dollars of Canadians.

We cannot in good faith hand over money to a government that does not yet know what its own fiscal policy is going to be, what its own budget is going to contain on what its own monetary policy is going to be. We cannot then be asked to hand over to that government before the government itself knows what its requirements will be or what its expenditures are likely to be, or be expected to give the government *carte blanche* to go into the financial marketplace and borrow anywhere in the world in any currency obligating the people of Canada to repay, before they have had an opportunity to determine whether or not the money will be used appropriately.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deans: In our parliamentary system, just because a political party forms the government does not give it an unfettered right to borrow. It does not give that party the right to proceed without reference to the House of Commons, or the right to expend money without first determining from where the money will come.