

S.O. 75c

● (1640)

Members of the official opposition cannot have it both ways. They cannot call for at least 30 new spending programs and ask us to reduce the deficit even more. That is why you have to be consistent. I ask for their reasonable consideration of our efforts to get on with the major business rather than steamroll and buttress these arguments which have no bearing on what is the substance of our economic program, the National Energy Program being at the heart of it.

It is with a great deal of pleasure that I speak, Mr. Speaker, and I ask for the support of this House for limitation on debate at this particular time.

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I listened with some interest to the hon. member for Willowdale (Mr. Peterson) who I presume time has passed by as he slept away there in the backbenches of the Liberal Party. He is certainly unaware of the facts and seeks to prove a totally false case, that the energy promises made in the last election campaign by his party have not been absolutely and totally broken. Just look at the way in which the price of gasoline and the price of oil per barrel have increased since last February. In case the hon. member does not know it, the price of a barrel of oil has gone up \$4.88 in that year. That is far more than the \$4 which was talked about by the Conservative government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss MacDonald: In case he does not know it, I can tell the hon. member the price of gasoline per gallon has gone up eight different times since last February. Let me repeat, it has gone up eight different times, totalling more than 20 cents. It has gone up 30 cents a gallon in the city of Montreal, and there is more to come. The poor member from Willowdale has been unaware of all of that.

An hon. Member: He has been asleep.

Miss MacDonald: I pity him, Mr. Speaker. But far more do I pity the people of Canada who were taken in by the false promises of the Liberal Party when they made them a year ago.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss MacDonald: Here we have the Liberal Party, the Grit government, once again trying to muzzle Parliament. Here they are invoking closure, refusing to let Members of Parliament express their point of view and doing their utmost to destroy the morale and spirit of this chamber. I shuddered earlier this afternoon when I heard the government House leader alluding to opposition days. He implied that we did not have anything to worry about because we have so many opposition days. It seems to me the moment he brings something like that to our attention he says it with a self-fulfilling prophecy. I think he really wants those opposition days to disappear, and would take those away from the opposition as well, just as he has been trying to take away the right to speak

in this chamber, and trying to limit debate on any number of bills that we have before us.

Mr. Evans: Name one.

Miss MacDonald: I suppose we should not be surprised by that. When he spoke in the chamber on January 13, this year, we find at page 6147 of *Hansard* the following:

If in the future we do not obtain agreement to reasonable time limits on the discussion of a particular bill, then it will be impossible for this House to function and we will be forced to use Standing Order 75c more frequently than has been the case in the past.

That is what he said when he threatened the House in January. It is certainly coming true. It has become commonplace for this government to introduce closure. We have seen it on three different occasions in the last four months. We saw closure introduced during the constitutional debate. Then we saw closure introduced in the energy debate. The member from Willowdale said that he wanted to be able to debate energy matters in this House. It was his government House leader who introduced closure relating to regulation of oil and gas in Canada lands. Now we have closure on a bill which goes to the very heart of Parliament itself, namely, parliamentary approval for the government on the way it supposedly handles the finances of the country judiciously.

The parliamentary system is based on the principle that the way in which the government raises or spends public moneys must be thoroughly and exhaustively examined by Members of Parliament. That is the single most important reason why this institution exists.

Back in the days when the barons forced the monarch to relinquish some of his power over the purse, they felt they should know how and from whom money was going to be raised, and that they should know how and on what it was going to be used. I sometimes think as I sit here in this chamber that the barons in those days of burgeoning Parliamentary process were more successful in getting answers from the monarch to the critical questions of how money is raised and spent than are opposition members who put questions to government ministers in the House of Commons today. I have no doubt that King John was far more forthcoming than King Pierre.

Mr. Crosbie: Queen Pierre.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss MacDonald: Here we are facing closure on a money bill which asks us for government authority to borrow \$14 billion: For what? We don't know.

Mr. Evans: Read the budget.

Miss MacDonald: For how long? We don't know that either. At what rate? That is another unknown factor. What we do know is that \$14 billion is one heck of a lot of money. It is a lot of money and it is not a figure to which most Canadians can easily relate. Quite frankly, I admit it is very difficult to relate to \$14 billion. I have to try to relate it to