

Procedure and Organization

measure his resistance would buckle. Well, Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Liberal Party and the government house leader have discovered that the Leader of the Opposition is not made of stuff that will buckle when principles are at stake. He will not buckle and permit freedom of speech in this institution to be impaired.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Coates: Because it seemed to the government that not all members of this party held similar views on all pieces of legislation coming before the house, it assumed that our ranks would be divided on this question. They are not. We stand firm behind our leader and members of other opposition parties stand firm behind their leaders. We will fight this legislation to the end, no matter when that end may come.

Although the government is anxious to streamline the rules and to introduce the guillotine, it has not told us why it wants this guillotine.

An hon. Member: The Prime Minister wants it.

Mr. Coates: Let the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), the house leader and others on the government side tell us why they want these new rules. During the present session there has been no indication that we need new rules, or that we need any but the ones we are now using. Nevertheless, just before we were to rise for the summer the government house leader brought forward for adoption new rules that would give the government virtually unlimited power to do anything it wished within a short time.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Coates: The government is anxious to secure this power because it wishes to introduce legislation about which it will not tell the country or this house. That legislation must be most damaging to the public interest. It seems that only after rule 75c has been adopted, and that will only come about if the government forces closure, will we learn what is to happen. Only then will the public learn that all Canadians applying for old age security, a cornerstone in the social justice system of this country, will have to undergo a means test. The people of this country will be told, "If you want to collect the old age security pension, which was yours as of right, you will now have to submit to a means test." Mothers who every month receive in the mail

family allowance cheques will be told that henceforth they will have to undergo a means test if they are to continue receiving family allowances. And why do I say this, Mr. Speaker? I say it because the government, as a result of irresponsible spending programs, has backed itself into a corner. It lacks financial flexibility and finds it impossible to undertake those programs it ought to undertake. These programs are necessary if we are to have the just society the leader of the Liberal Party talked so much about during the election campaign and which is further away than ever.

● (3:50 p.m.)

Who in the country today would say the society in which we live is more just than that of June 25, 1968? No one can say that, Mr. Speaker. Any man who on June 25, 1968 felt it was going to be easier to own his own home if the present Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and his party were elected is today in a position where it is twice as difficult, if not impossible to own a home.

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Coates: The Prime Minister is finding out from the wheat farmers in the prairies how just they think this society is after he has been one year in office. The fishermen on the east coast are finding out how just this society is after this government has been in office one year. The shipbuilding industry and the shipbuilding workers in this country are finding out how just this society is under the Prime Minister. The veteran, old age pensioner, the blind and disabled, they are all finding out how just this society is.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Coates: This has happened after only one year, Mr. Speaker. Heaven help this poor country if we have to put up with this government for four years, and heaven help us if they have 75c to work with as well. There have been other Liberal governments in other eras that have moved in this chamber for awesome powers, powers that Adolph Hitler did not even expect from the Reichstag in Germany. These are powers which are common in communist countries. If rule 75c passes there really will not be much difference between a country that has only one government for which everybody votes because there is no alternative, and a country with a government that has power to say to the opposition any time it wishes, "You have