

Government Administration

Coal Board. The second item will be government order No. 75, Bill C-190, with regard to the National Energy Board Act. The third item will be government order No. 49, Bill S-5, with regard to the Oil and Gas Production and Conservation Act.

On Tuesday, we will call for second reading debate the pensions bill to which we have given first reading today.

For Wednesday, an announcement will be made when the progress to that point is noted.

On Thursday next, we will call for the first item government order No. 47, with regard to the Standards Council of Canada, Bill C-163. This will be followed by government order No. 78, the Industrial Research and Development Incentives Act, Bill C-193. I would remind hon. members that the business on Thursday next, March 12, will be interrupted at eight o'clock for the budget speech by my colleague the Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacLean: Mr. Speaker, with regard to today's debate, I should like to make a suggestion for the consideration of the House. After the first four speakers representing the parties in the House have made their speeches in the time normally allotted to them, would the House be agreeable to limiting the following speeches to 15 minutes each so that more members will have an opportunity to take part in the debate?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): We would be most agreeable to that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: It is so ordered. Orders of the Day.

• (3:30 p.m.)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS**BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

ALLOTTED DAY S.O. 58—NON-CONFIDENCE MOTION—GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION—EFFECT OF ALLEGED ARBITRARY ACTIONS AND DESTRUCTIVE POLICIES OF SECRECY AND NON-DISCLOSURE

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition) moved:

That this House condemns the government for its arbitrary actions and destructive policies of secrecy and non-disclosure including its attitude towards parliament which deny the right of citizens in this

[Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

country to be informed and to participate fully in the government of Canada, particularly through their elected representatives, and which endanger the balance between the two structures of government—the executive and the representative.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) is out of the city today because, by the very nature of things, this resolution touches the Prime Minister closely as head of the government. I think I should begin by quoting one of the Prime Minister's favourite authorities in politics. In the 16th century Machiavelli wrote:

—our experience has been that those princes who have done great things have held good faith of little account, and have known how to circumvent the intellect of men by craft, and in the end have overcome those who have relied on their word.

It is in light of this quotation that I wish to consider some developments that have taken place in Canada during the past year or two, developments which, taken together, I suggest are quite alarming. It seems to me that all the talk that there has been about participatory democracy has been only a screen to hide the effort to concentrate power in Canada and to weaken our traditional safeguards against the abuse of power.

Over the past couple of years there has been a gradual but quite radical change in the system of government in Canada, with an almost invisible and ad hoc amendment of our constitution, so as to build up the power of the office of the Prime Minister and of the cabinet of Canada and to break down institutional safeguards designed to protect the individual Canadian. While not wishing to be in any way an alarmist, I do suggest that a pattern has emerged which requires the attention of the Canadian public, certainly the attention of Parliament, and not least the attention of private members on the other side of the House in whose name the cabinet is accumulating this power.

I ask this House to consider some of the elements of this dangerous, and I think undemocratic, concentration of power at the centre of government in this country. The changes in Parliament are well known, and they are very crucial. They are well known because Parliament must always be the ultimate protection of the individual against an arbitrary government. The issue goes way beyond Parliament and should be discussed in its broader terms as well, that is, in terms broader than Parliament, important as that is, because Parliament is the most important