

*Time Allocation*

**Mr. Kelly:** I will permit a question at the end. There may be some people in this House, Mr. Speaker, who would accept that argument and their response might be, "Well, I can buy that, but I don't like the way you imposed it. You ran roughshod over the rights of civil service pensioners. Why didn't you in some way try to negotiate?" Well, when I was the Parliamentary Secretary I met with many of the people who were negotiating on behalf of the Public Service. And I will tell you right now, they were not interested in negotiating this. They told us point blank that they would not negotiate a surrender of—

**Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich):** Sincerely promised.

**Mr. Kelly:** —benefits for which they worked so hard in years past. What we were told in essence was there were no options. There was no option the Government could follow, no option to explore, no willingness on the other side to sit down and negotiate. They told us beforehand this was an issue which was non-negotiable.

When you get into a situation like that, what do you do? What do you do if you sincerely believe that inflation must be fought, and it must be fought through some kind of income limitation? I do not think there is anyone in this House who can answer the question. Finally, Mr. Speaker—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** Order, please. I am sorry to interrupt the Hon. Member for Scarborough Centre (Mr. Kelly), but his time has expired. He may continue with the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

**Some Hon. Members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** There is not. The Hon. Member for Lethbridge-Foothills (Mr. Thacker).

**Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Lethbridge-Foothills):** Mr. Speaker, it is with real sadness that I rise to speak to closure motion or time allocation on Bill C-133 because I think it really is a tragedy.

I would like to speak first of all to the comments of the Hon. Member for Scarborough Centre (Mr. Kelly) because I think he simply missed the point on most of the issue. He argues that closure will save Parliament, and I take issue with that because I believe closure and time allocation destroy this place. The purpose of a Parliament is for debate, and the reason we have debate is so that the media can spread that debate across the country, and ordinary Canadians can interrupt their lives in terms of reading newspapers and articles so as to get some feel for the issue, then give input back to us as Members of Parliament. If we were a small postage-stamp country, perhaps closure after two or three days would be appropriate but certainly it is not in a country as large as Canada when it takes weeks for the news to get across the country in terms of the weekly newspapers, which is basically the newspaper which most people read. We have to keep these debates going. It takes people time to go to their church meetings or their women's institute meetings where these issues are discussed. Then they have to formulate in their minds whether the

Government is acting fairly or unfairly, then get back to us so we can start to reflect their views in the House.

• (1640)

The Hon. Member for Scarborough Centre (Mr. Kelly) is simply wrong when he says we have to close this thing off quickly. I say to him that the prime reason the Government is into closure is that it is now beginning to get input from Canadians that they genuinely do see the issue. The issue is not whether we have restraint. We all agree there has to be restraint, and that is why we voted for Bill C-124. But we certainly did not agree to the Government breaking contracts. For years civil servants have paid in 7.5 per cent to their pension, whereas most of the payments in private industry were less than 5 per cent. They actually had earmarked an extra 1 per cent, pursuant to an agreement, which would guarantee them indexation. We also know that in the superannuation account there is over \$15 billion built up, but now the Government is unilaterally, by closure, taking away the benefits they have paid for. Any decent Government would have at least said, well, we took your money under false pretences; we will give your money back and then you are under six and five. So I say to the Government, give the retired civil servants their money back. They will be glad to take it because there is lots of money in the account.

If the Government would accept, Mr. Speaker, in the parliamentary process, more amendments from the Opposition and even from its own backbenchers, we would not be in this jam today. I know that in all the legislation that I have been involved in in the last three years, not once has the Government accepted amendments from the Opposition, even though Government backbenchers agree that on this issue, this would be a good amendment. What the Government would sometimes do is reject the Opposition amendment and have one of its own Members bring it in with a separate motion, and then accept that. But the Government sees Parliament as just an in-and-out operation. If you go over to the Privy Council Office, Mr. Speaker, and watch how legislation, the budget and everything, is prepared, you will find they have enormous flow charts there. They show how an idea starts, goes through various Departments and officials, and then you will notice up in the far right-hand corner a tiny, tiny little box. That is Parliament. It is just a simple in-and-out operation. The Hon. Member for Calgary Centre (Mr. Andre) gives a beautiful speech on this because he has looked into it in great detail. Parliament is irrelevant to the bureaucracy. The reason for that is that Government backbenchers have failed to stand up to Cabinet. They do not seem to understand that it is an issue of executive power versus Parliament. Now, on this Bill we know several Government Members have stood up against it, and that is to their credit. I am looking at the Hon. Member for Ottawa-Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) right now.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Thacker:** Mr. Speaker, I want to deal with the points made by the Leader of the NDP. Recently we have seen them make an enormous attempt to get on the morality bandwagon,