

*Time Allocation*

Taking into account everything this government has done so far, we might believe we are going back to the dark ages.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, it seems scapegoats are constantly being sought out by that side of the House. Attempts also seem to be made to cover up the obvious lack of experience and lack of realism amongst the government members, by blaming their errors on everything around them including, naturally, the opposition parties.

Mr. Speaker, it is high time they took serious action with regard to inflation, unemployment, the budget deficit, and that they assumed their responsibilities. But no, they keep on doing the same thing. At the present time the government, in my opinion, is doing nothing more than spreading confusion. We never know what they are going to do next. They seem to be in a constant state of uncertainty. We are going to Jerusalem, but then we are not going. Oil will be rationed, but then it will not. Energy will be controlled, but then it will not. The better off, the oil companies, are being favoured with higher energy prices while rumours spread to the effect that there will be an excise tax that will add from 20 to 40 cents to the cost of gas and heating oil. The government takes care, of course, of private industry and corporations. That is all very well but with this increase in the cost of oil, they seem to forget completely about the workers who have to use that oil to go to work. They also forget those who are not as well off, who are trapped by inflation and by their heating bills and who have to find the money, whether they like it or not, to meet the cost of their daily needs. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Ritchie) also said, I believe, that if we are short of energy, controls may be applied.

The present government, Mr. Speaker, is in the process of spreading disarray, uncertainty and concern among the people. They do not seem to realize that an increasing number of Canadians, men and women, live on the threshold of poverty. You need only take a look at the latest statistics of the Senate committee or the commission on poverty to see that because of inflation and because the cost of energy and the cost of food are going up as they have been from last year to this day, the percentage of people living below the poverty line will certainly increase within the next few months.

Mr. Speaker, as I have been saying for some time, I think this government should focus its efforts on more serious problems instead of catering to a privileged group of home owners and spending \$575 million this year and \$3 billion in four years. It should certainly concentrate its efforts on some objectives like the reduction of inflation, job creation and Canadian unity rather than continuously trying to find some means to advantage a class of our society that does not really need it now. It should seek to help other people in several other fields.

To conclude, Mr. Speaker, I merely wish to ask the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Baker) who is not in the House

[Mr. Lamontagne.]

now, if he really wants us to resume debate on Bill C-20 in Committee of the Whole and if the President of the Privy Council or the Minister of Finance really intends to study carefully the amendments that we are going to propose and those that might come from other opposition parties. It is very important for our democracy that the opposition, whose responsibility it is to improve bills proposed by the government, be taken seriously and contribute to bills that will help not just a privileged group of home owners but also many Canadians and Quebecers who would find it much easier to make ends meet in the disastrous situation created by this government.

• (1630)

[English]

**Mr. Bob Rae (Broadview-Greenwood):** Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot of fluff in this debate, but the fluffiest contributions came from the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Baker) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Crosbie). The first myth—I would even say the first big lie—which has to be confronted head on and seen clearly for what it is by the Canadian people is the lie that we have to get this bill through before Christmas so that the Canadian taxpayers will be able to get a credit for 1979. That is simply untrue. It is recognized by everybody who has any understanding of the nature of our legal system that it is untrue, and it is recognized by anybody who has taken a look at the legislation, which makes it clear that it applies to 1979 regardless of when it is passed. So the theory put forward by the President of the Privy Council is that we are somehow under an obligation.

In his role as the executive assistant to the Queen's Printer, which he seems so determined to carry out in this House, he tells us that they had to get the forms out, there was no choice; that the agenda for this government is set by its printers, that the forms have already been sent and that therefore we have to pass this bill before Christmas. Not only does that put the cart before the horse, but it is also completely untrue, and it is time somebody called this government's bluff.

The second argument which has been made by the government is that we in this party have been holding up this legislation because we do not want to give the Canadian home owner anything.

**An hon. Member: Right.**

**Mr. Rae:** That is not true. That is a lie. That is another lie. I will tell the House why it is a lie. It is a lie because what we on this side of the House have been saying is that both home owners and renters should get the benefit of any change to our tax system. I hear the hon. member for Brampton-Georgetown (Mr. McDermid) squawking. He squawks every time I get up. However, the Minister of Finance said that we in this party were holding up this legislation and we did not want to give home owners anything, and that is a lie. We are holding up this legislation, we are asking questions about this legislation and we are putting forward amendments to this legislation which are on the desk of the Minister of Finance, and which