

*Government Orders*

must be doing whatever he does in the House with the knowledge and support of his leader as well.

**Mr. Cooper:** Mr. Speaker, I do not want to leave any doubt on the record but that I as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House and his colleagues support him. We support him because we have confidence in the way he manages our business and in the way he delivers to the country a consistent pattern of legislation that reflects the concerns and goals of the government.

**Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the motion of the Minister of State for Privatization and Regulatory Affairs to allocate time and impose closure on the debate on the bill that would authorize the privatization and sale of Petro-Canada.

The government calls it time allocation. We in the opposition call it closure. That is a bit of an ugly word. It is an historically ugly word. It means a lot of members who want to speak to a bill will not have an opportunity at the particular stage with which we are dealing, the stage in relation to which time allocation is moved. These members come from all across the country. They represent regional and local interests. They all have a perspective on the legislation, and they must have the right to continue to have input into all legislation on behalf of their constituents.

Closure or time allocation removes that. It squeezes it out. It squelches the debate which is essential to the deliberation of legislation in the House. The closure or time allocation instrument is a very blunt instrument, and Canadians are entitled to an explanation from the government whenever it is used. They should demand it, and I am demanding it. I want to know why the government requires time allocation/closure right now.

It has not provided a reason. It feels that parliamentary procedures are a little too cumbersome for it. Why does it want to exclude members of the House from debate on what we regard as a very important piece of legislation? What is the reason? What is the rush?

I am curious because just last week, after the first three speakers had spoken in the House, the minister for privatization rose and moved time allocation. What was the rush? Having tripped up at that instance, it is back in the House this week. It still has not been explained why. The government claims it cannot reach an agreement,

but the evidence in the House last week was that it barely tried to reach an agreement.

**Mr. McDermid:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I hesitate to interrupt my friend, the critic for privatization, but I would want him to be accurate in his comments. I introduced a motion which gave notice, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Milliken:** That is not a point of order.

**Mr. McDermid:** I am on a point of order; I can have a point of order. I introduced a motion to give notice that in the future I would be introducing time allocation, but in fact I did not introduce time allocation. I want the hon. member to be fair when he is making those comments.

**Mr. Lee:** Mr. Speaker, I hear what the minister is saying, but the fact remains that notice was attempted to be introduced at the time, the same notice that was introduced yesterday. I am sure the Canadian public will understand the fine distinction between notice of the motion and the motion itself. However, I want to suggest that this is another form of tyranny by the majority. We all know it is there, it is a legislated tyranny. The majority in this Parliament has the right to move ahead with its agenda, but it does not have the right to trample on a healthy opposition, and this is a healthy opposition.

• (1200)

We find, in exercising this tyranny the way the government does, we only have the odd check and balance left, and one of them happens to be the Senate. The government does not like that; it is shocked that there is a check and balance in the existence of the Senate. But that is what the Senate, as a place of sober second thought, is doing.

An hon. member suggested earlier that the government House leader was a puppet of the Prime Minister, that the Prime Minister had a particular agenda, and that this time allocation motion was part of that. I have another suggestion. I have a suggestion that this time allocation initiative is not part of that agenda at all. In fact, I want to suggest that the government does not have any agenda.

The Minister of State for Privatization went to cabinet table and said, "Gee, do you think we could get on with the Petro-Canada bill", and the other ministers around him said, "Wow, we have nothing else going. John, take it away, roll with it, run it through, because we have