

*Time Allocation*

to talk about the reasons for time allocation, and to debate on the use of time allocation. I will reverse the words of the Hon. Member for Hamilton-Wentworth (Mr. Scott) and say that obstruction is a shocking abuse of the time of the House and that the tyranny of the minorities is what we see in many of these cases preventing good legislation. I would like to draw the Hon. Member's attention to the fact that a Member of his own Party suggested that time allocation is a gentle form of ending debate.

Why do we have to have time allocation? Presumably, it is to make better use of the time of the House of Commons. I can appreciate the fact that when people have something to say, they should have an opportunity to say it, and that we should be able to see Bills going through the proper stages and eventually coming back to the House for passage.

I would just like to quote to the House the exchange which followed the introduction of time allocation on second reading of this Bill. The Hon. The House leader of the Official Opposition made the statement that whoever it was in the New Democratic Party who made the accusation that they are Liberal stooges is wrong because their sympathies with respect to Bill C-131, the Old Age Security Act, are precisely the same as those of the NDP. He then went on to say, "We intend to vote against both of those measures", which are Bill C-131 and Bill C-132. Then the House leader for the New Democratic Party said as reported at page 21173 of *Hansard*:

However, voting against a piece of legislation is one way to indicate opposition. We are not only opposed to the point where we want to vote against it, but we are opposed to the point where we do not want to facilitate its passage in any way.

I would gather from that, that even if there were amendments which were acceptable, they would not be willing to see this Bill passed. Therefore, I think that we have no alternative but to look toward some reasonable use of the time to get this Bill passed. I would like to read you something from the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald*, which I found quite interesting. It is entitled "Parliament's pique". However, most of us would like to think we would always be referring to it as "Parliament's peak". It says this:

No one would deny Parliamentarians their support of political prerogatives, steadfast stands on principle, and opportunities to make their opponents appear to be the progenitors of weak or defective thinking. It is, after all, an adversarial forum whose members have long held opposing views on many matters.

But one expects—

And this is what is important. It says that one expects the Government to govern, and they expect it to govern well, while the Opposition opposes—and I think the important words I am going to bring out in this next message read:

—while the Opposition opposes for an allotted period before the majority proceeds to approve the issue it has raised.

I will read that for you again. You were not listening. It reads:

—while the Opposition opposes for an allotted period before the majority proceeds to approve the issue it has raised.

What happens, of course, is that in normal debate, the Government claims the Opposition delays passage, and it has been suggested that the Government has the majority and has

the Speaker, and one assumes that it could easily make the rules of procedure work. But that is exactly what we are not able to do. We are not able to make the rules of procedure work. The Opposition Members have vented, overly so, considerable rage over the proposal and have squandered their consideration with procedures which have long strayed from the point. There are many matters which demand the earnest attention of the House, but they are being similarly mishandled. Therefore, if there is any reason for having time allocation and trying to put the debate in proper perspective, I hope you will appreciate that that is the argument I am trying to put forward.

What has happened with the time spent on this Bill? You have already had the numbers of those who have spoken on this Bill, how many speakers we have had, how much time we have had, but the important thing is that although it is time allocation, we are still discussing the Bill, and by the end of the day there will be approximately 70 speakers on this Bill. What really bothers me is that we seem to be talking about the senior citizens as if they were a sort of mindless body, and we have not only to speak for them but also to think for them. I would like to read you something which was in the *Ottawa Citizen*, written by Marjorie Gillies on January 25, 1983. She says, the following:

Although some seniors have expressed dissatisfaction with the government's imposition of a six and five per cent restraint increase on retirement income for the next two years, Bert Hanmer—

Mr. Hanmer is a retired Canadian Legion national service bureau director.

—says the majority of pensioners aren't upset by the limitation.

Mr. Hanmer is vice-chairman of the Council on Aging in Ottawa and Chairman of the Economics of Aging Committee. He is a pension specialist. He goes on to quote figures which we already know, that 54 per cent of Canadians over 65 will not even be affected by the restriction. Then he continues:

You know, most elderly Canadians will tell you they have little to complain about today—

It is interesting that when one hears the other side of the story, one is told that really it is not the truth, it is not right. But I also receive letters from my constituents and I also see people in my constituency. I have yet to see the pressure that has been told is there by Members of the Opposition. I think most seniors are grateful to take some part in this battle against inflation.

● (1700)

What happened in committee? That is interesting. This was one of my first experiences in trying to organize debate in committee. Actually we had to go out and seek out people to come and make presentations before the committee. Most said they had read about the Bill, examined it and chosen not to make any kind of presentation to the committee.

In any event, we had five groups appearing before the committee. They spoke mostly—