

Time Allocation

We could be playing this game of chicken, rushing things through the House, from now until next spring. Yet every week the Government will say that we have to rush things through. If the Government were that serious about child care, why was this Bill not placed on the Order Paper in the fall of 1984? Where was the urgency then? Where was the urgency for a lot of the other things we are seeing happening at the last minute like building roads and pipelines? One would think a municipal election was coming up the way the Government is doling out money to try to bolster its support.

I realize that my time is almost up. I regret that once again the Government has decided to use its majority to push through this legislation. Representatives of the people of Canada, members of the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party, have listened to the key people involved in child care, the ones who are responsible for trying to provide the spaces and the services. Every one of them said that this Bill should go. I regret that the Government, instead of listening to them and to the Opposition, has decided to ram the Bill through this House, waving the red flag in front of the Senators. I can guarantee that it is all for naught.

[Translation]

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard—Anjou): Mr. Speaker, I too should like to join in this debate and denounce the Government which, for one reason or another, is always prepared to impose closure and cut short our parliamentary debates.

For openers, Mr. Speaker, let me make it clear at the outset that it was this Government which in the early days of its mandate raised the issue of parliamentary reform. We in the Opposition co-operated with the Government precisely because we believe that indeed Parliament is the appropriate forum to debate legislation such as this measure on child care. So this is a major issue in our society and there should be no need to resort to the kind of tactics this Government used in the past when it was on this side of the House. We all vividly remember that when the Conservative Party was in Opposition it kept the bells ringing for two weeks.

Now that we are dealing with an important piece of legislation like child care, the Government could hardly wait for the official Liberal opposition critic and the NDP Member to finish their speeches before bringing in closure. Mr. Speaker, is that what the Conservative Government had in mind when it began selling parliamentary reform to Members of all Parties in this House? What a scandalous contrast. When the Conservatives were in Opposition they tried every trick in the book to upset the parliamentary timetable of the then Government, but now that they sit on the Treasury benches they lower the boom and will not let the democratically elected Members have their say.

Mr. Speaker, 40 witnesses appeared before the parliamentary committee which considered this Bill. The 40 witnesses were allowed a measly half hour each. They were paraded before the committee one after another like sheep. This way in,

and this way out. Thirty minutes each! All 40 of them denounced the Bill. So, Mr. Speaker, the fact that not a single organization came before the parliamentary committee to give its views on the legislation and that all 40 witnesses did speak out against it would indicate that something is wrong with the Bill. And we are supposed to be here to debate and correct defective legislation.

If the Government sets a limit on the time allocated pursuant to the Standing Orders and under the parliamentary reform proposed and adopted by this Government with the co-operation of the opposition Parties, we cannot speak out, we cannot even attempt to improve this Bill which everybody has found seriously lacking. How can we be expected to rise in this debate and support this measure?

Mr. Speaker, I used the word demagoguery. The Government would have us believe that Canadians need this Bill if we are to upgrade the child care system, but we know full well that the Bill as drafted will not produce anything worthwhile. First they say it will be phased in over seven years, Mr. Speaker, so what do we do about the urgent needs of the people?

Mr. Speaker, the truth is that we are headed straight for the hustings! Belatedly, after wasting time for four years, the Government—

• (1340)

[English]

After mismanaging the time of the House for four years, now all of a sudden the Government gets a social conscience and says: "We need some social legislation. What about child care?" This was a promise which the Tory Party made in 1984. Here, on the eve of the election, they say: "Why not? Let's rush to the House. Let us put the gas on this piece of legislation and muzzle all the democratic rules," which the same Government introduced and approved. That is how disgusting this attitude is at the end of a Government's term of office. I am sure Canadians will remember that. We are going to make sure Canadians remember that.

The legislation is not even in the Senate yet, but the Government is blaming it for blocking the Bill. How can the Senate block it when the legislation is still here in the House of Commons? That is how the Tories' minds work at this time because they are planning an election and they are doing everything they can so that they can again con Canadians and make believe, as they did in 1984, that they can do beautiful things. But once they get into office and get power they do the opposite. That is what we are talking about here today.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I simply must speak out against this unacceptable and shameful Government approach. We will do everything we can to reject undemocratic practices which fly in the face of the parliamentary reform we began in the fall of 1984 shortly after we were all elected to come here to Ottawa.