

*Time Allocation*

remember when Standing Order 75C was first introduced in the early seventies by the then House leader, Hon. Donald Macdonald. He is the man now in charge of our economic destiny. At the time the Government was embarrassed to use the full force of the closure motion which, before the rules were changed, was Standing Order 33. Instead, they brought in Standing Order 75A, b and c, all of which constitute time allocation in one form or another. The then President of the Privy Council went to great pains to soothe the fears of the Opposition and of the media who were all wondering what would happen when Standing Order 75C came into effect. He told them that this would not be used as a routine measure but would only be used under very special circumstances. So much for the Hon. Donald Macdonald's commitment to the House. He is no longer a Member of the House and does not have to stand by that commitment, but it is frightening to think that he is now in charge of our economic destiny.

● (1550)

When I first came to Parliament and watched the House of Commons in action, it was the Black Friday in 1956 when the full force of closure was used in the pipeline debate. It also brought down the Government of the day. I remember the flag debate when closure was used. That was also a very special moment in our history.

It is the slow strangulation process which the Government seems bent on, with a fixed bottom line date when everything must be completed according to its desire, its will, its timetable—it is the sheer deviousness of the thing that is making us sick on this side of the House.

Never in the history of this country have so many closure motions been faced by a Parliament. During this Parliament, Members of Cabinet have moved closure 15 times in this House. Closure was moved shortly after the introduction of the constitutional resolution. Cabinet cannot do this, Mr. Speaker. Cabinet cannot deny Canadians the freedom of speech which this House represents unless that Cabinet is sustained by its backbenchers. I say to Hon. Members opposite that they must examine their consciences on each and every occasion that a Cabinet Minister suggests it is a good idea to move closure. On this side we do not feel that it is ever a good idea, particularly when it affects the constituency that bringing down the guillotine will, in this case.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I say that this legislation is unfair, and even if the Liberal Government cuts us off, senior citizens will remember how unfair it has been to them.

**Mr. David Smith (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, at the outset, I think it is important to clear up some of the remarks made by the previous speaker.

First of all, the matter we are debating is not closure and anyone who suggests that it is, does not understand the rules. There is a fundamental difference between closure, which was introduced by the Conservative Borden Government in the naval debate prior to World War I. The closure measure,

known as Standing Order 33 under the old rules, is fundamentally different from time allocation which falls under Standing Order 75 and, in this particular instance, Standing Order 75C.

My friend, the Hon. Member for Hamilton-Wentworth (Mr. Scott) said that under certain conditions, when there is an agreement, time allocation is a proper thing. The first two parts of Standing Order 75 cover the circumstances where there has been an agreement between two of the major Parties or among all three Parties and has never been used. The only occasion on which time allocation has been used Standing Order 75C, has been when there was no agreement.

Of course we would like to have agreement on how much time should be spent debating Bills in the House. The reason we have used this particular provision is that agreement has been impossible. It is very important for the public to understand that to refer to this provision as closure is wrong, misleading and unfair.

Let us see how much time has been spent in debating this Bill, Mr. Speaker. On November 18 we spent two hours; November 25 three hours 30 minutes; November 30, four hours 50 minutes, and December 10, two hours 23 minutes.

When we were discussing what would be a reasonable period of time to spend on a Bill on second reading under the new rules, a lot of us were influenced by what happens at the Mother of Parliaments, in Westminster. On second reading of a Bill, the standard procedure there is that in very few circumstances does debate exceed one day, with no automatic adjournment. If it is a controversial Bill it is usually debated into the small hours. Some Members suggested we should give consideration to that. In view of the fact that we were not going to have evening sittings under the new rules, it was thought it might be reasonable to assume that we could have two days' debate on second reading.

Of course, on second reading the nature of the debate is that the Bill be discussed in general principle. The type of amendments which may be moved at second reading are very limited. That is why, under the new rules, we provided for one round of speeches and then allocate eight hours, with the 20 minute and 10 minute time limit. Eight hours is approximately two full days, when Question Period and Routine Proceedings are excluded.

More than eight hours has been spent on second reading of this Bill. Under the new rules, the 10 minute time limit on speeches would automatically have come into effect some time ago. At report stage, the purpose is not to do again what was supposed to be done at second reading, that is, debate the general principles of the Bill, but to debate the amendments of which notice has been given, and changes that may have taken place in committee. This has been done exhaustively on this Bill.

The only conclusion that a fair and objective-minded person can come to is that the Opposition, for political reasons, has decided to dig in its heels and not allow this matter to come to a vote without time allocation. That is a legitimate political