

Time Allocation

here. They can use closure and muzzling of debate and all sorts of procedural tricks to jam inappropriate legislation through". But at least the Chair said: "That is far enough and we are not going to tolerate this nonsense".

If this were the only time the government decided to bring in its heavy hand of the majority and just ignore the minority—if you like the tyranny of the majority—then I suppose we could say: "Well, they did not know any better. They do not understand parliamentary democracy. They do not understand what it means to govern within a democratic framework". This is now a trend. This happens time and time again. It is the only way of course that it can get bad legislation through. From time to time the Official Opposition and the New Democratic Party try to improve legislation and make it the best we can. We are not always happy with it but we try to do our best.

The government has brought in legislation that essentially, as I said, takes universality and eliminates it, something that as Canadians we have struggled to achieve, something which we hold up high on the world stage and say: "This is what it means to be a Canadian. It does not matter who you are and what you are, you will be able to get the old age security cheque when you are aged 65". Yet this government says: "Well we have changed our mind. We are going to change all that now". This is not the Canada we want to see.

This has happened time and time again. There has been closure, muzzling of Parliament, shutting Parliament down, making it impossible for members to speak. That is not what a parliamentary democracy is all about. That is why we say this government shows contempt for Parliament, the principles of Parliament, the traditions of Parliament and the practices of Parliament day after day.

I want to send to the Prime Minister a very clear message this morning. It is that as far as the New Democratic Party is concerned we are not going to take this any more. To make this place work properly you need to have the support of all of the parties and you need to have the will to make this place work.

In closing, I am simply putting the government on notice this morning that in the future if it plans to use the heavy hand of closure, the jack-booted approach to the parliamentary system, we in this party will not stand

for that. We will pull out all the countless ways and means that we use to make this place effective and efficient. If the government is not going to recognize the practices and traditions of the parliamentary democracy in this country, then I am putting it on notice that we will not co-operate any further in the future and it will not be able to pass, without an incredible struggle, this kind of mean, cruel-spirited legislation that we are seeing here before us today.

[Translation]

Mr. Douglas Young (Gloucester): Madam Speaker, I cannot say that I welcome the opportunity to take part in this debate. As you know, there are Canadians who would like to hear Members of the House of Commons discuss this bill. They realize it has some extremely negative implications. However, instead of discussing those implications today, we ought to consider the fact that the government will not let us have the kind of open and full debate that we should have here in the House.

[English]

One of the problems facing Canadians is to try to figure out why the government is so stubborn about dealing with this particular proposal. It has tried to suggest that people who are suggesting the clawback is not an acceptable proposal are defending the indefensible, defending people with high incomes. Canadians understand the need for a debate on this matter, particularly senior citizens. They understood from the very outset that this was an attack on what was called a sacred trust. They understood from the very beginning that clawing back any amount, no matter what the threshold, was the beginning of the end.

• (1210)

What I find very unsettling is the fact that we have seniors across this country who are among the best organized groups of citizens in Canada telling the government, telling MPs who are not members of the government that we have to debate this issue, that we have to clarify all of the implications that will arise now that the crack is in the facade of universality. We have to go back and tell them that the government has decided unilaterally, because it has more members sitting to your right, Madam Speaker, than to your left, that it is going to impose closure.