

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Alexander: We resent the guillotine approach. Is this going to be the pattern of this government? This is the third time in this session and, as I read the statistics, the thirtieth time since confederation. You can see the pattern of this government. They say, "We are the masters of this House. We will do what we want, when we want and how we want, and damn the opposition who represent the attitudes of the Canadian people."

In closing, let me say that the minister had to meet the test. He had to show where there was an unreasonable delay. He failed in that regard. The minister had to show that there was a pattern of filibuster. He failed in that regard. I hope that this government, in particular the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the members of the Treasury benches, will not bring about this type of confrontation until there has been complete discussion as to how we can bring about changes in the rules in order to make this place work much better. However, we resent the minister, after 12 hours and 50 minutes debate bringing in allocation of time, or closure.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, every time the government brings in a closure motion, by whatever name it is called, we get the argument by assertion from the government side of the House that this place talks too much and is downgrading itself because its debates are too long.

I want to express my opposition once again to the speeches that we get from the government side of the House about the House of Commons losing its standing and losing its prestige. There are improvements which could be made in our rules and procedures.

● (1520)

Despite comments made recently about me by the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Cullen), I have participated in the making of a good many rule changes. With regard to some of them I think we have probably given away too much from the opposition side. Nevertheless, I am prepared to admit there is room for improvements in our procedures. But I want to state as emphatically as I can that there is nothing wrong with the House of Commons which could not be corrected overnight by the government bringing in legislation to meet the needs of our times.

What is wrong today is not that the members have lost their ability to debate, or are bored or suffering from malaise: what is wrong with this place today is that we are in a country which is facing a very serious situation, but we have a government which is doing nothing to cope with it. We have a government which tells the country, as it did in Toronto over the weekend, that the Liberals have the answers. But they do not vouchsafe to us what those answers are.

It is the same old story. They have been in power for most of this twentieth century. They think Canada belongs to them and that it is somehow a violation of the principles of democra-

Motion under S.O. 75C

cy for members of the opposition to wish to debate the issues which are before us.

Mr. Faulkner: Sophistry, pure sophistry.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): The Minister of State for Science and Technology (Mr. Faulkner) says "sophistry". I do not know which of my statements he is calling sophistry. I repeat that the difficulty this country faces is that we have a government of arrogance, a government which believes the country is its possession and that it can somehow keep control without really trying to meet those difficulties. I could go on to outline a number of them. One of them is the unemployment situation which faces us today. Does the government have an answer? No. Its only proposal is to tighten up the operation of the Unemployment Insurance Act.

I could discuss the statistics and review the number of hours we have spent in this debate. I could repeat the arguments which have been used in the past about closure—whether or not it is justified. But the issue before us today is not how much time we have spent, or how much time we are going to spend, on Bill C-27. It is the attitude of the government toward the burning issue of unemployment.

This attitude was well demonstrated in Toronto last week when the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) told unemployed students in that city, "My heart bleeds for you", and so on. Then he turned around and said he was more concerned about certain other groups. He mentioned, in particular, unemployed women in Newfoundland. Well, it is hard for us to swallow that, because if there is any place where better provision is needed in the Unemployment Insurance Act than this bill is proposing, it is in Newfoundland. The government has no answer to these people at all. More than a million Canadians are out of work, and all the government can propose is to tighten control over the operation of the Unemployment Insurance Act.

Some of us have pleaded with all the vigour we can muster for improvements in the field of social security. The answer we get is: There is only so much money to go around. Mr. Speaker, it is not money that is in short supply. It is goods and services. We could provide a better standard of living for all our people if we produced more goods and services. That is what we need. At the same time, there are a million people in Canada who are not working. A government which cannot put these two things together, unemployed workers and unmet needs, does not deserve to have the running of the country.

It does not matter whether we have spent two days or ten on this. The issue is the government's attitude toward unemployment. On the question of unemployment insurance, many arguments have been put forward from both sides of the House, some out in the open and others, no doubt, in the caucus discussions of the Liberal party. The government's answer to the dilemma of unemployed students is to say: Go to some other country.

The government's answer to its own Liberal dissenters who want to do something more is "closure". I know that the word