

[English]

Some members opposite have suggested that this bill favours only the wealthy. The fact is that the wealthy do not have mortgages; they pay them off as quickly as they can and then use their credit at the bank to borrow money for business purposes from which they make business loans and investments, the interest on which is deductible. I do not see any experts on these matters in the House, but if members opposite have any doubts there are a lot of members who can explain that to them.

This bill is aimed at helping middle-income Canadians, the unsung, unhelped millions of Canadians who have been the most hurt by the huge deficits of recent years and the inflation created by the previous government. One thing that inflation does is take away from those who work, save and plan for their retirement and give to the speculators, the bankers and those who buy land, pieces of gold and other things that do not benefit the economy in any way, shape or form. That is what inflation does to this country. That is why middle-income Canadians have been hurt by the government for approximately 16 years. This measure is a modest step to help middle-income Canadians with mortgage interest and property taxes this year.

We on this side are determined to have this legislation enacted before the end of this year. I wonder if the ten members opposite who stood up last Friday to prevent us from extending the hours will show up for the debate before and after Christmas.

I wish to reinforce a couple of points that were made regarding the use of Standing Order 75C to allocate time for debate. We have already spent seven days debating this measure. What has been added to the sum of human knowledge by any member opposite during those seven days? Last Wednesday members opposite had all day in which to propose amendments. Which of them had any amendments to propose? Which one of them stood up to propose amendments? Yet they complain now that they have no time in which to do so. When they had the chance they did not put any forward. This illustrates the hypocrisy of members opposite with respect to time available in this debate.

● (1620)

Members of the opposition say they need more time to debate this matter further. But why were so many of them absent while this measure was before the House? Again, if they want more time, why did so many of them raise spurious questions of privilege last Friday? In particular, why did four of them, including the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Trudeau), get up to make exactly the same points although the Speaker had given a clear ruling on the matter under consideration?

I would remind the House that Standing Order 75C was introduced by the former government in 1969 and has been used on 23 occasions since then—

Time Allocation

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Scott, Victoria-Haliburton): Order. I regret to inform the hon. member that his time has expired.

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, I am very glad to be able to say a few words on this motion of closure put forward by the government. It seems to me to be another case of a government flip-flop. They always talk about open government. To me, open government is not a government which imposes "*le bâillon*", as we say in French, after a few hours of debate on clause 1 of a bill.

I should also like to remind hon. members on the other side that 12 days ago, on November 28, I was the one who proposed a vote on the second reading. It was fortunate for the government that the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Darling) rose to carry on the debate in order to bail out the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Baker), thus avoiding a vote which we would probably have won.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, during the initial debate, I described Bill C-20 as being extravagant, irresponsible and unfair, and I still maintain it is all those things. The fact that the government is trying to prevent us from debating the bill adequately gives us the distinct impression that the other side of the House has lost all sense of responsibility and all sense of proportion over the problems confronting Canadians. It also gives us the impression, which might not be far from the truth, that the other side is governing for the rich of the country and thinks that the problems of the have-nots will solve themselves while others are reaping the benefits. We see in the media the enormous profits made by certain companies and certain sectors of the economy. Yet a great many Canadians are struggling to make both ends meet in the face of inflation and all the other economic hardships of this day and age. We are being blamed for delaying passage of this bill. Some say that we have forced the government to resort to muzzling.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that this is somewhat of a joke being played on hon. members and even on their own party. What has this government done since May 22 last? They waited five months before deciding to call back the House, and finally once it was back, they waited two months before introducing such an important bill.

I was reading a couple of days ago the speeches delivered on Friday during the debate on this motion. Naturally, I read carefully the remarks made by the hon. member who is perhaps the most experienced and the most respected of us all, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), who was quoting a statement made by the President of the Privy Council, who now sits on the other side but was then a member of the opposition. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre was quoting the following statement made by this hon. member:

[English]

This is a black day for Parliament and for this country.