

## Income Tax Act

However, they have resorted to Standing Order 75c, denying us any amendments, complaining when we speak, when we carry out our duty imposing closure on the debate in committee of the whole. The government is now imposing closure at the third reading stage. We shall have three and a half days at the most to study 790 pages and propose amendments, if that is ever possible.

• (4:10 p.m.)

Once closure has been imposed in the House of Commons, the government will do the same in the Senate and tell them: Do what you will, this bill must be passed but by the 1<sup>st</sup> of January. This means that senators will not be able to propose any amendment, for if they do the bill will have to be referred back to the House of Commons. And then, it is impossible, from a technical point of view, for this bill to be passed by New Year's. In other words, the government will befoisting upon the Senate the same bill that they will have rammed through the House of Commons. So, what is the Senate? A useless institution, as I believe it is! If the government have faith in it, as they told the Senate, let them prove it to us and stop fooling it. Otherwise, they admit that we are right.

The Minister of Finance told senators the other day: Pass this bill before Christmas and I promise that afterwards you will be allowed to bring amendments to it. Why not, then, propose amendments right now? What urgency is there to pass this legislation before New Year's? In any case, there is not enough time until then to achieve the just society.

In short, the government has lost control of the situation in taking a wrong decision in the first place, that is in bringing in this overly thick, complicated and exhaustive legislation. They want us to discuss a 790-page bill as we would discuss a 12-page one. There is a big difference between the two. It is impossible to spend so little time on such a bulky bill. Today the government is held down by its first decision. This is why it finds itself compelled to sink deeper every day into the repercussion of this bad decision. It invoked closure on the debate at the stage of the committee of the whole and has done it again today. Tomorrow, it will drop the guillotine in the Senate and say: Now we have the just society.

I think that Canadian democracy as we experience it now in Parliament is in danger because the government thinks Parliament and the Senate are its servants, whereas we say Parliament and the Senate should be at the service of the Canadian people. It is not the same thing, Mr. Speaker. There is a great difference.

If at least a reform of Parliament was under consideration so that the government could not be defeated by any other means but a non confidence motion, each member, of whatever party, could express himself and vote freely according to his conscience without fear of defeating the government. We would then be interested in agreeing on time limits, since government members would be doing the same work as opposition members. However, I understand why closure provisions are invoked: government members envy us because we are able to do our work while they are prevented to do theirs on account of their being gagged all year long.

[English]

**Mr. Colin D. Gibson (Hamilton-Wentworth):** Mr. Speaker, this is one of the most important debates in the history of the Canadian House of Commons. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that as a result of this debate the majority of the House of Commons will demonstrate that they can govern Canada and that they shall govern Canada.

The subject of the motion is whether or not the majority of the Members of Parliament can place a time limit on debate. If the fate of government legislation is left to the whims of opposition members at this important time in our history, then we shall all be actors in the slow but gradual decay of Parliament. The House of Commons will no longer represent a forum for public debate but will flounder and disintegrate as an anachronistic tower of Babel, scorned by the Canadian people.

**Mr. Peters:** At least you had a better speech writer than the last one.

**Mr. Gibson:** As time goes on Parliament will at last be conscious of the clock. The hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters) might bear that in mind. At last the House of Commons has climbed to the same high level of debate as is practised in the House of Commons at Westminster. In the Mother of Parliaments there are opposition leaders skilled in the cut and thrust of debate. The Conservative House leader might well study the rules of Parliament as I am sure he knows very well that in Westminster a time allocation rule goes into effect as regularly as Big Ben on the hourly note. The really shallow hypocrisy of this debate should be disclosed to the Canadian people.

I urge members of the opposition to support this motion as do all other parliamentarians in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, in the Inter-Parliamentary Union and throughout all western democratic institutions, or they will find themselves within that narrow band of dissident minorities who are not moving with the times. I plead for removal of obstruction and delay in debate. I attack outdated rules of antiquity. I plead the case for efficiency in this House, not gamesmanship. I support a system of planned debate based on reasonable time limits—

**Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West):** Does that include reading speeches?

**Mr. Gibson:** —not repetitive irrelevant criticism. I advocate a system of debate which is structured to improve the law, not calculated to fill up pages of *Hansard* with repetition. I seek fair play in the great chamber, the House of Commons, this chamber which is the greatest assembly of Canadians from coast to coast.

**Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West):** Would the hon. member tell me whether that is his speech?

**Mr. Gibson:** Yes, I swear on a stack of Bibles that I wrote every word of it. Without reform how can we proceed to pass urgently needed legislation?

**Mr. Paproski:** Those are not Bibles; those are tax bills.

**Mr. Gibson:** Mr. Speaker, our pledge to the people was to legislate, not to procrastinate; to govern, not to hedge; to act, not to evade. For these reasons I urge speedy