

(Mr. Fox) should know that at the Liberal convention Mr. Trudeau's leadership was unofficially questioned by 19.8 per cent of delegates, but not officially of course, Mr. Speaker.

If we wanted to know the true figures and if all of Canada had been truly represented at that convention, the figure expressing resentment against the Trudeau administration would probably have been 35 per cent.

In view of this resentment of the Canadian people and these rising protests, I am therefore not surprised that the government is showing once again its old arrogance and saying to the official opposition: A few hours more would be detrimental to Canadian politics and we must therefore muzzle you.

Mr. Speaker, may I say that the members opposite seem to be afraid of history, but history is back to haunt them today. We can already see the ghosts of C. D. Howe and St. Laurent. Those were historical times. Closure had been invoked at that time and we know what historical results it had for that government.

Today maybe on a less significant level, I admit it, the principle is still valid. Today this same government is using the muzzling procedure to impose closure. The judgment of the opposition will also be the judgment of the whole Canadian people concerning the Trudeau administration, which has already been judged in 1972, which was judged recently in Hochelaga and which will continue to be judged as a government which does not care about democratic principles, and uses its omnipotent majority to try to muzzle the official opposition. It will not succeed! You may be happy today and you may still be happy next week, but when the next election is called, this government will see that Canadians have a long memory. Action of this type is not likely to give the people a better idea of the democratic process.

[English]

Mr. Gordon Ritchie (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, it is not often that I take part in debates dealing with House procedure, but I think this is an important debate and I have a few things to say about it. I was astounded by the comment of the leader of the government in this House, that parliamentary business should be a matter between House leaders. Surely that is not the way parliament is to be conducted. I can only say it is another example of the very blatant use of government power and arrogance.

I think much of this bill represents a feeling of frustration, a feeling that the opposition in this House cannot make itself heard effectively. I trace this to the 1968 change in the rules whereby the business of supply was taken out of the House. Well over one-half to two-thirds of all the business in this House has a financial component. By taking away the business of supply, whereby the government had to justify its expenditures to the House as a whole and a minister could not get his estimates through until approved by the House as a whole, the government has become much less responsible to the House and to its members. Therefore, I think this debate can be traced in large measure to the failure of parliament since the rules changes of 1968 to have any adequate control over public expenditures. The government has replied that we can have opposition days and move a motion directed at a

particular government department. But all that the government has to do is to sit out the criticisms until ten o'clock; the day will then be over and the government will have won its position without disclosing it or being made accountable.

The important thing to note about this bill is that it is a form of censorship, which is essentially dangerous in any free society. One person in the communications field who was talking to me about the CRTC and the CBC—I might add that he is a supporter of the party across the way—said to me, "You don't really criticize the government too hard because you don't always quite know how governing bodies will view any criticism of the government". So that criticism of the government, while it may exist privately, is evident in the communications world in Canada; but there is a very marked reluctance to criticize the government of the day too severely. It cannot be said any better than it was said by my seatmate, the hon. member for Palliser (Mr. Schumacher), when quoting from the *Calgary Herald* of October 27 in reference to this bill, as follows:

● (1600)

That is a very dangerous precedent, even if the aim—to make fully Canadian magazines more viable—is praiseworthy. The regulations are not, strictly speaking, censorship. However, they tend to legitimize a mechanism for government interference in the decisions of a publisher. They also tend to create a climate which discourages vigorous criticism of the federal government—a disturbingly authoritarian government, at times. Donald Macdonald's decision to withhold federal advertising from a Montreal separatist newspaper is significant in retrospect. When a government begins to take measures against publications whose editorial position it dislikes, the habit can quickly become ingrained.

The government's action against *Time* and *Reader's Digest*, admittedly, is not intended to silence voices of dissent. The hope is that stifling these two magazines will enable *Maclean's*, *Saturday Night* and the like to breathe more freely, commercially speaking. But no matter how noble its purpose, a government that sets out to destroy or financially cripple a magazine bears watching. It might develop a taste for blood.

I think this is the important aspect of this bill and the aspect with which the debate has generally been concerned. It was said by the government House leader that more speeches should take place on third reading and at the report stage. I am one of those who believes that in practice, unless we speak on second reading, what we might say at third reading and at the report stage will be of little value in explaining to the public at large what we think about a particular piece of legislation. I am one who supports strongly the suggestion that debate in this House at second reading is the most valuable way in which issues can be put before the Canadian public.

Mr. Hugh A. Anderson (Comox-Alberni): Mr. Speaker, in speaking on this motion, I think there are a few facts of which I should like to remind the House. The subject of Bill C-58 has been a matter of public debate for at least two decades. The government announced its intention to move on this matter on January 23, 1975, in a statement in the House by the Secretary of State (Mr. Faulkner). Three of the respondents for the opposition, the hon. members for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens), the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie (Mr. Symes), the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin), expressed basic support for the policy announced in January. In this regard one need only check *Hansard* of January 23, pages 2527 to 2529. If one does check the