

the subject. We should be able to hear the views of members who are concerned on either side. The government is preventing hon. members from getting the advice they need in order to vote intelligently on this matter, and I suggest it will live to regret its arrogant stand.

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to take part in this debate although it is a very sick motion. The Solicitor General (Mr. Allmand) is well known for his views on capital punishment and, while many would disagree with them they are respected because they are sincere. Yet a minister who has such strong views on an element that some people consider has to do with the protection of society comes into the House of Commons with this type of closure motion and, in effect, speaks for a type of capital punishment.

● (2040)

The Solicitor General is against capital punishment for those who commit murder, but now he wants to go beyond the pale and, after literally only 16 hours of debate in the House, has the nerve to stand up and practically refute his sincere belief in the abolition of capital punishment. By coming out for "capital punishment" on this bill, Mr. Speaker, that is what he is doing.

I thought that all of the April fool jokes came early in the day, Mr. Speaker. If I did not know better I would say that the motion before us today is one of the sickest April fool jokes that has been perpetrated in the House of Commons in many a year. One hon. member on that side a while ago asked what Bill C-83 was for. It is entitled "an act for the better protection of Canadian society against perpetrators of violent and other crime". Is it not a sick April fool joke, when talking about a bill to protect Canadian society, to have the government gag the representatives of Canadian society?

The subject matter of the bill is protection against the perpetration of violent and other crime, but what is the most violent parliamentary crime, Mr. Speaker? It is parliamentary rape. It is parliamentary closure. This is a form of parliamentary rape, and I am not going to be raped by those government eunuchs over there!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nowlan: While the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) may say that backbenchers on all sides are nobodies—and we can debate that—I never thought I would hear the Minister of Justice (Mr. Basford) promulgate his theory of parliamentary democracy by, in effect, ending parliamentary debate. This confirms that he shares the opinions of his boss, the prince from Pierreland, that he believes not only in parliamentary nobodies but in verbal eunuchs. That is what he wants to do, Mr. Speaker; he wants to cut off debate.

I had thought that some of the backbenchers on the other side of the House would have spoken to this motion. As my hon. House leader said this afternoon, having presented some well reasoned statistics, after only 16 hours of debate there have been 11 government members—

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): Where is your House leader now?

Business of the House

Mr. Nowlan: Would the hon. member for St. Boniface (Mr. Guay) just restrain his empty vessel. My grade six teacher told me many years ago that it is the empty vessel that makes the most sound. I know he is not fully empty but only half empty. Be that as it may, there have been 11 government members, 11 Conservative members, four NDP members, and four Social Credit members who have spoken in this debate. I agree with what the hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. Leggatt) said, that—

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): A point of order, Mr. Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): The hon. member is rising on a point of order.

Some hon. Members: Sit down.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, the reason I am getting up is that I have two points of order really. One is to ask the hon. member which member he pointed to when he was talking about the House leader; my other point of order is tell him that if he keeps his mouth closed he will never get into any trouble.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order, please. The hon. member for Annapolis Valley (Mr. Nowlan) has the floor.

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, I hope you do not take that time away from me but instead add another minute or two for such an irrelevant comment. The Solicitor General talked earlier this evening about government time and the orderly conduct of government business. How many Canadians know that we are now on the 276th day of the first session of this parliament after the election of July 8, 1974? This is the longest session of Parliament in our history. We have been in session over a span of three years, yet after only 16 hours of debate the government has the temerity to muzzle, gag, and throttle the representatives of the Canadian people on a matter affecting all Canadians.

In closing—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nowlan: —I should like to say, as others have said before me, that while the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Chrétien) and the government House leader may be in favour of "muzzlitis"—and bringing in closure four times this session must be quite an uneasy record that the government will have to defend—may I say in all seriousness that with no commitment from the other side about what will happen to the number of people who will sit on the committee, and with no commitment that there will not be closure in committee, this type of closure is not only closure against members on all sides, including government backbenchers who have spoken equally with us up to today, but closure against all Canadians, and that is what is going to be resented by all Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal club or muzzle has been wielded for the fourth time, but the second time within a month. The first time it was to impose a new tax distribution of medical costs between Ottawa and the provinces since no agreement had been