

The Constitution

and deprives the people of Canada of a voice in the forum of debate.

The voice of the people of Canada is of paramount importance. It is here in the House of Commons that the Canadian voice is heard and acted upon. All too often the government has turned a deaf ear to that voice and to that of members of the House who enlarge on what is being said, and all too often the Prime Minister orders a limit to debate when what is being said contradicts his notion of what is right and what is wrong for the people of Canada. It is highly possible that he is about to act in the same arbitrary manner over the debate on the patriation of the Constitution.

It is appropriate at this time to remind members of the House that the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) stated categorically that every member of the House would have the opportunity to speak on this issue. I presume such an assurance was not given lightly, and I say to the Deputy Prime Minister and government House leader that we certainly expect that all members of Parliament will have the opportunity to speak. I and my colleagues accept the right to debate the substance and style of the government's constitutional proposal, a proposal the style of which is as damaging as its substance. Because the issue before us is of such grave importance, it is the right of each and every member to have the opportunity to speak. For the Prime Minister and the government to invoke closure at some point during the debate would be an affront to members of the House and to the Canadian people. I would therefore call upon the government—

Mr. Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I have listened with great interest to the point of view expressed by the hon. member during his speech and I have noticed that he has been speaking now for 25 minutes. May I point out that the House leader of the official opposition stated earlier this afternoon, with approval, that hon. members on the government side had limited their speeches to 20 minutes and that only two of their members spoke a day. He stated that this was an example which members on his side would follow.

An hon. Member: That is not a point of order.

Mr. Lalonde: I wonder if members on the hon. member's side would listen to their House leader.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak on this spurious point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): That is not a point of order.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a legitimate point of order. You should prevent such spurious acts on the part of ministers who should know better. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) is trying to smuggle in a point of debate under the guise of a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Order, please. I accept the argument that this was not a point of order. The hon.

member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Darling) has the floor.

Mr. Darling: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the comments of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde).

Mr. Nielsen: I don't.

Mr. Darling: As was mentioned several times here, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources makes lengthy speeches here from time to time, but he has not produced too much. He is probably the member most responsible for the mess in which we find ourselves today. He is responsible for the high cost of energy.

An hon. Member: He is also dishonest.

Some hon. Members: Order!

Mr. Darling: Our leader, the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark)—

Some hon. Members: Order!

Mr. Darling: I am not out of order. Do not worry about that.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Darling: The Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition had made an agreement with the province of Alberta, but over a year later the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has not produced anything.

Some hon. Members: Order!

Mr. Darling: As a result, we are paying through the nose. It is about time he left the House and headed for Alberta. It is about time he came up with a deal and it is about time he started to give in a bit.

Mr. Nielsen: Let him speak to the oil people and the real estate people over there.

Mr. Darling: I know that time and time again all of us have read many comments on this. I will mention the fact that when this resolution was presented to the House by the Prime Minister—I believe it was on October 2—one of the few times in the last few years that he has spoken in the House, our leader walked out. I can still see it. Our leader stated he was against this resolution, and I put my hand up to my face and said "Wow, what is this?" I was very skeptical of the position taken by the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I will admit that to the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie (Mr. Irwin) who is pointing to me.

Mr. Irwin: You were right.

Mr. Darling: I was wrong, as the people of Canada eventually decided, because, may I point out to the almighty Cabinet opposite, 64 per cent of the people of Canada are against the