

Government is to continue to use its massive majority to choke off any legitimate chance to study important legislation such as the changes to the Income Tax Act in Bill C-84? It is a massive piece of legislation. It contains 235 pages and hundreds of amendments. The Government will not let a committee of the House do a thorough job of looking at government expenditures and the raising of taxes, the very things which Parliament was set up to deal with in the first place. Parliament was set up to deal with these matters, and the massive Conservative majority is being intolerant of the rights of the minority.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Bernier (Beauce): Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak to the motion for time allocation on consideration of Bill C-74. The amendment presently before the House is a proposal to send the Bill back to committee.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill received exhaustive study when the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections examined the Government's White Paper on redistribution. We spent hours and even days on this exercise, Mr. Speaker. You know, the people on this committee are sensible and practical, with a few very rare exceptions. If the people of this country, if business people were to see and try to analyze the behaviour of certain Liberal Opposition Members in certain committees, they would be flabbergasted and absolutely speechless. These people on the other side of the House have become experts in wasting the precious time of Hon. Members of this Parliament. They make a habit of indulging in useless verbiage.

Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Privileges and Elections also studied the Bill for a period of six weeks, I repeat, six weeks, during which a number of witnesses were called and heard. Testimony was given careful consideration by both the committee and the Government. Following the deliberations of the committee and testimony by expert witnesses, the Government proposed two amendments to the Bill at the report stage, to ensure that the legislation would be readily acceptable. Very serious testimony was given. The witnesses who appeared before us were reliable. They adduced a number of useful elements that gave us a broader view of the Bill and helped us form an opinion.

During the debate on second reading and in committee, the Liberal Opposition, and I repeat the Liberal Opposition, made the point that the Bill as written was a violation of the principle of representation by population. All witnesses who appeared before the committee indicated that the root of the problem was a section of the Bill which subsequently was removed. I think you follow me. I think you understand.

Then the Liberal Party critic—

An Hon. Member: It isn't easy.

Time Allocation

Mr. Bernier: It may not be easy to follow, but in any case, that is what happened. I am referring to the sequence of events.

The Liberal Party critic proposed exactly the same amendment which is now being openly criticized by his colleague, the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis (Mr. Prud'homme). That same Member is now proposing that the Bill be sent back to committee. It is all quite confusing! Clearly, Mr. Speaker, we have here another example of a party that is disorganized, in complete disarray, and poorly led. The people in the Liberal Opposition are incapable of agreeing on the right orientation for their policies. It is obvious that confusion reigns. There must be a lot of unhappy people in that caucus, and if they aren't unhappy, they don't realize what is going on. Either one or the other.

Mr. Robichaud: Certainly not!

Mr. Bernier: Mr. Speaker, by trying to adjust the Bill to reflect the views expressed by members of the committee, the Government, and I am very happy to be sitting on the Government side, the Government responded to concerns that have been clearly explained. It is unnecessary to send the Bill back to committee for further study. It is a waste of time and energy.

The only reason it was necessary to move time allocation for this Bill is the fact that the Liberal Opposition—in disarray as usual, as we see here today—decided to continue an obstructionist policy that is both unjustifiable and foolish, as you will agree, Mr. Speaker. They are doing this to the detriment of a large majority of the population that supports the Bill as amended.

While it must remain neutral, the Chair can see that you are ridiculous. I trust it is a mental comment he can make. And I hope that the people watching us on television or listening here in the gallery, and there may not be enough of them this morning to witness how ridiculous the Opposition is, I hope they realize, Mr. Speaker, that the useless verbiage of the Liberals contributes nothing to this country. In my opinion, we should proceed without paying any attention to their insinuations.

● (1140)

[*English*]

Mr. Keith Penner (Cochrane-Superior): Mr. Speaker, when the Government House Leader brought in time allocation, or closure, on Bill C-74 earlier this week, I cannot deny to the House that I was highly agitated, irritated and quite hot under the collar. I want to say that I am more calm and collected now, but in exactly the same frame of mind. I am strongly opposed to what the Government is doing in forcing Bill C-74 upon us without allowing the full and adequate debate which this Bill deserves. I want to say again that we have not had adequate opportunity to present the case referred to by my colleague, the Hon. Member for Algoma (Mr. Foster),