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available, on average, for considering government business. This means that for more than two and a half months, aside from the days set aside for the Opposition, there was no time for anything else on the floor of the House except the debate on the Constitution. Almost one third of the time of the House of Commons was used for the exclusive consideration of constitutional resolutions, not including the debate in committee.

Another major issue was the National Energy Program. This major debate took 112 days of Government time in the House of Commons, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps we should realize that 112 days represents nearly a full year of the time of the House, spent exclusively on energy and the Bill on our national energy policy—112 days, which means 377 hours and 22 minutes, and this in addition to the six days of debate on the Budget, which was also debated in the same period, six days that are not included in the 112 days, and neither am I including 15 or 16 days when the division bells rang in Parliament, when the Progressive Conservatives, in a manner that is totally unacceptable, systematically paralyzed the Parliament of Canada and prevented any debate from taking place.

When I said that 112 days of Government time were used to debate the energy issue during this session, that does not include the 15 or 16 days we heard the division bells, and this means that for all practical purposes, we have once more had almost nine months or a full parliamentary year devoted almost exclusively to energy.

Another vital issue has been the economy. Parliament has considered the subject on many occasions. If I am not mistaken, we have had four budgets, in addition to statements on the economy, and I may remind the House that in the previous budget, we proposed our 6 and 5 policy to fight inflation, which has proved to be a tremendous success. I think it is irresponsible and unrealistic of an Opposition Member to claim that this major anti-inflation policy was put into effect outside Parliament. The policy was debated here in the House of Commons. It was analyzed, amended and debated in the Parliament of Canada, which was asked to consider one of the most pressing issues of the moment, in the middle of a recession: how do we prepare for economic recovery and how do we fight against inflation? This was followed by the budget brought down by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde), which included \$4.8 billion to stimulate the economy and create jobs in this country. People who say that the major economic issues were not debated in Parliament are either half or totally asleep, or they are entirely ignorant of what is going on in Parliament or they are not being sincere, but I hardly think that is the case.

● (1220)

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that as far as the 6 and 5 policy is concerned, we must not forget the time the House of Commons

needed to debate this policy so that we could obtain the results we have today, at this very moment, namely, that inflation is now down to 6.6 per cent, from 13 per cent in August 1981. The bank rate, the rate set by the Bank of Canada, is now 9.5 per cent. We all remember that only a year and a half ago, mortgage rates were over 20 per cent. Our 6 and 5 policy has worked, it has benefited the entire country and has produced concrete results. We realize this now. How was this brought about? By the Government, who originated the plan, but also as a result of debate in Parliament. The Parliament of Canada was asked to consider this important question, and in fact did so for a grand total of 72 days, the equivalent of two full semesters of our parliamentary year, or 236 hours and five minutes, when it debated Bill C-131, Bill C-132, Bill C-133, Bill C-139 and Bill C-125, which are directly connected with our 6 and 5 policy and to amendments to update the Income Tax and remove any uncertainty in the business world.

Therefore, if we look at three major issues—the economy, energy and the Constitution—we realize that in the Parliament of Canada, in the House of Commons and in committee, a considerable number of days and hours were spent on debate on these issues, time that could therefore not be used to consider other issues of perhaps lesser importance nationally but nevertheless vital to certain activity sectors in this country. That is why, since we have been considerate and have shown respect for this institution, and since we have allowed debate on major issues despite the Opposition's often provocative attitude, we are asking Opposition Members for their co-operation regarding debate on less controversial measures. Now what happened then? Even before we could implement the parliamentary reform which we managed to get approved by the House because of a committee that worked in good faith and the cooperation of the House as a whole, and in spite of the unacceptable objections of a few senior members of the Progressive Conservative Party, we were able to carry out the present experiment, Mr. Speaker.

However, even before we proposed this parliamentary reform to the House, I had suggested to the Progressive Conservative Party and the New Democratic Party that we have a rational debate on a number of bills. I refer to last fall, to October 1982, when I submitted a list of 16 bills to the two House Leaders of the Opposition, and more particularly to the present Leader of the Progressive Party, the Acting Leader, the Hon. Member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen). There were 16 bills about which I said: "Listen, the session has been going on for two years, a reform is forthcoming, a committee is working on it; let us show that we want Parliament to work, let us forget the silliness of the bell-ringing incident that you, the Progressive Conservative Party, brought about, let us forget your filibuster during the constitutional debate, and let us try to show the people that parliamentarians on both sides of the