

## S.O. 75c

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** The hon. member is mouthing from his seat the same speech he made on the last occasion. He is beyond the pale, I feel nothing but kindly pity for him, and I express it to him.

**Mr. Evans:** How does that relate to the principle of cessation of debate in Parliament?

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** It relates in this way. A government must have the power from time to time to shorten debate. However, that power is such a strong weapon that it must be used judiciously. It ought not to be used, as the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) has said, in a bill of this nature, a bill which can impose tremendous burdens. However, when a government has a specific program which it would like to bring forward and which is of some benefit to the country then, I believe, in the face of mindless opposition—and that is precisely what we faced with regard to the property tax bill—it is justified. There is as much difference between this borrowing bill and the property tax credit legislation as there is between night and day in terms of benefits.

**Mr. Evans:** I am glad you are not the House leader any more.

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** If the government would use closure or allocation of time, then, in the absence of any other remedy, the government has the power to cut off the right of parliamentarians to speak. While I was government House leader, I put forward some proposals which I believe would have given additional rights for Parliament to hold government accountable. However, the history of rule changes has not been to make Parliament less the handmaiden of the government; it has been exactly the reverse. Parliament's powers have been eroded.

Parliament's power to carry out the duty of making the government accountable has been less with each change. I would like to believe and accept wholeheartedly that it is the intention of the government House leader to give greater opportunity to the opposition parties or private members of this House to hold a government accountable. I hope his legislation will preserve, on the one hand, the right of the government to govern and, on the other hand, provide the opportunity to the opposition and others within this Parliament who are not members of the government the right to hold the government accountable. That is why we are here. Part of that accounting process now is the right to debate and to expose to public view the failure of government policy. The failure of the government's economic policy shows in this bill in two ways. First, we are looking at \$14 billion; second, it is for a period beyond that which is required by the government. No self-respecting member of Parliament could possibly support the motion put forward by the Hon. President of the Privy Council (Mr. Pinard).

• (1630)

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be here.

**An hon. Member:** Is the applause for you?

**Mr. Peterson:** I appreciate the distinguished taste of my colleague, but I think the applause was because the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) had finished his remarks. It is obvious that I have not been here very long; I have been here for approximately a year. Perhaps I have a lot to learn, but, after listening to the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton, I should like to recount the lessons I took from what he said.

I think he was telling the House that if we had an important bill before us it would not require debate, we could agree to it, it would go through, and the opposition would not consider it worthy of debate. He is saying this is not an important bill, therefore they will debate it. He said that we do not have a program before us, therefore they will debate it.

**Mr. Kilgour:** Horse feathers.

**Mr. Peterson:** That is what the member said. I can assure the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona (Mr. Kilgour) that he will find those comments in the blues.

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** Read the blues.

**Mr. Peterson:** Even though I am a new person around here, to me it is an unacceptable approach.

Another thing concerned me about his speech and it relates to the substance of what we are doing right now. He said that the bill on which he introduced Standing Order 75c, the tax credit for home owners, was fundamentally different from this borrowing bill; therefore, he was justified in doing what he did but we are not justified in what we are doing at the present time. When is it justified to use Standing Order 75c?

As a new Member of Parliament, I feel it would be appropriate to look at the words of the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton when he compared the use of closure in the flag debate to his use of closure in December, 1979. He said:

It was the initiative behind the debate to ram changes in the rules of the House down the throats of members. I do not intend to do that today. What we are using here, and I think we had better make it clear to the people of Canada, is time allocation under the provisions of Standing Order 75c. This is a far gentler measure.

I suggest it is. It was put in the rules for a very important reason, the reason expressed by the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton at that time. He said:

If I had any qualms or any worries as a parliamentarian about bringing forward a motion of this nature to close off debate, these qualms and worries disappeared a few months ago when I watched a long litany of motions and other matters being brought forward that bore no relevance to the business of the House.

**Mr. Kilgour:** You have only ten minutes.

**Mr. Peterson:** Let me turn to what has been brought forward thus far during the debate on this matter. Everyone in the House agrees that Canada's economic future is of major importance to every Canadian.