

Procedure and Organization

should make it clear to the Canadian people that we fully support this rule and believe it constitutes an important and positive contribution to improving the rules of this house.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: Would the hon. member permit a question? Is he prepared to recommend this rule to the house in its present form?

Mr. Allmand: While we on this side are not as perfect as members of the opposition are, I would say that the rule is one of the best rules I have seen—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Allmand:—suggested or put to the house in connection with the allocation of time. It is much better than anything proposed by the opposition and I shall fully support it when it comes to a vote.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): The Liberals bowed their heads in shame when you said that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Allmand: Right now we are seeing the respect the opposition have for democracy. I have sat here all night listening to their speeches. Now, when I get up they are not willing to listen to me for a while. I want to say that we, the backbenchers of this party, not only support this rule but support it as a matter of principle to the extent that we are willing to place our political careers on the line for it. If, as members of the opposition assert, this is a bad rule or one which the people of Canada do not want, then the people of Canada will have an opportunity to choose. If they want the kind of parliament which the opposition demonstrated yesterday and in the last week or so, I shall gladly leave this place and decline to participate in it because I do not want to sit in a house such as we sat in yesterday, and have sat in for the last ten days.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Allmand: During this debate members of the opposition have asked what we on the back benches over here think, and that is what we think. We do not support this rule because the whips are on, or because we are members of this party, but because we think it is an important rule in enabling parliament to do the business which needs to be done for Canada.

In particular, I think rule 75 is necessary for several reasons. I shall enumerate them because the opposition is so misinterpreting this rule that it is important we should put forward a positive argument in its favour. First, while this rule will allow reasonable time for debate, for all points of view to be put forward, it will not permit the filibuster, or debate merely for the sake of obstruction. Second, it will prevent long, unproductive debate with much repetition and irrelevance. Third, it will help the House of Commons to become a much more productive and efficient institution. I do not think there is any other way in which a government can properly plan a legislative program, schedule business and organize parliamentary manpower and parliamentary services. There must be proper co-ordination between the government and the legislature. The government has responsibility for preparing legislation and if this is to be done properly there must be some kind of schedule. Finally, I believe that a system providing for an allocation of time will make for much better debates. When there is a limit on debates I find that all parties put forward their best speakers; they are better prepared and this leads to a much more productive debate, within the limited time, than those endless debates which go on without limit.

What do we see at the present time? At the present time we have a parliament which is at the mercy of the opposition, as we saw yesterday. It is subject to the control of the opposition. As the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) pointed out tonight, we do have closure at the present time: it is closure by means of filibuster, repetition and irrelevance. While bills may eventually come to a vote, so much time is taken up in wasteful debate that many important measures never get to the floor.

There are several basic questions which I believe we in this house and the Canadian people generally should ask regarding this matter. First, should parliament be controlled by the majority or the minority in the final analysis? Second, should freedom of debate be an unlimited right or should it, like all other rights, be subject to limitation? As part of the civil law of Quebec we have a well known doctrine known as the *abus des droits*—the abuse of rights. According to this doctrine, no right is unlimited; it is always subject to restriction when it might interfere with the rights of others. There are many examples of the limitation to the right of free