

Time Allocation

across the way preached year in and year out about freedom of information for Canadians. Now that it is the Government, why will it not provide that information to Canadians? Why this secrecy? Why does the Minister not release the impact studies? Why does he not tell Canadian people what he knows about what will happen to drug prices? What is the Minister afraid of? The Parliamentary Secretary says he is afraid of Harvie.

● (1250)

The second thing we want is a parliamentary committee that will travel to the cities of the country to study the impact of this Bill. What does the Government have against a travelling committee which would allow ordinary Canadians to have a say? Ordinary Canadians cannot come to Ottawa to have their say. Most people cannot afford to come here.

Mr. Andre: That is what we were elected for.

Mr. Nystrom: The Minister says that that is what we were elected as Members of Parliament to do. On many occasions in the history of this Parliament public hearings have been held throughout the country on important issues. Last spring a committee held hearings in five or six cities on two-price wheat. I believe this Bill is important enough that public hearings should be held on it in the regions of Canada in order that Canadians can have a say on how this legislation should be developed. I see nothing wrong with that. I do not know why the Conservative Party wants to block the freedom of expression and freedom of speech of Canadians. That is exactly what the Government is doing by bringing in time allocation and denying us the right to travel.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I know many people, and there were many who signed petitions throughout Canada. In my own Province of Saskatchewan, thousands of people have signed petitions expressing their fear of an increase in the price of drugs in Canada. They would like to have public hearings held in Saskatchewan. The same thing goes for Quebec. Quebecers of both sexes want to have public hearings in Montreal and Quebec City, in order to make their views known to the Government.

We have here 58 Conservative Members from Quebec, and I wonder why Quebec Members do not want public hearings in their ridings so they could hear the views of their constituents.

[*English*]

It is only normal that ordinary Canadians should be given an opportunity to express their points of view on such an important Bill.

The Government is going to cut off debate. We will have a few more hours for debate on second reading. A committee will study this Bill, probably right here in Ottawa. The groups in western Canada which represent ordinary people and the poor cannot come to Ottawa to make presentations. Ordinary

Canadians have a right to express their points of view in parliamentary committees.

An Hon. Member: They will.

Mr. Nystrom: The Hon. Member says that they will. However, we have no guarantee that this committee will travel across the country and hear from ordinary Canadians. We were elected by ordinary Canadians and they have a right to have this parliamentary committee travel to their areas so that they can make their points of view known.

For those reasons I cannot support time allocation and I am very surprised that the Conservative Party is supporting it. We have had only three hours of debate at second reading. I would like the Minister or the Parliamentary Secretary to cite all the precedents they can find of a Government serving notice that it will impose closure after only three hours of debate. I do not think there are many examples of that. I wonder why this Party, which advocated freedom of information and more democracy, would want to cut off debate at this time.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I guarantee that the New Democratic Party will hold its own hearings across Canada. We will do whatever we can to mobilize public opinion against this Bill which will increase the price of medicine and pharmaceutical commodities for ordinary Canadians. If ordinary Canadians fight against this Bill we will be able to do with this Bill what we did with the proposal to deindex old age pensions in June of 1985. The people of Canada will not forget this in the next election campaign.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I will not reiterate the comments of the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski) about time wasted, which comments destroyed the arguments of the Member for Yorkton—Melville (Mr. Nystrom) before he even made them. One wonders where the Member for Yorkton—Melville was when the Deputy Prime Minister spoke of the hours and days which have been wasted by the Opposition.

Another delaying tactic was used by members of the Opposition Party which is deserving of remembrance by all who recognize the fundamental importance of our democratic system. I extended the courtesy to the opposition Parties of informing them that I intended to move first reading of this Bill on November 6. I did not have to extend that courtesy. We could have introduced the Bill for first reading with no warning. However, I did extend that courtesy. The NDP used that knowledge to try to prevent the Government from introducing the Bill for first reading.

Mr. Orlikow: That's right.

Mr. Andre: That has never happened in our democracy before.

Mr. Orlikow: We never had such a bad Bill.