

Time Allocation

Government for a period ordinarily of four years. They should be able to execute their program during those four years. At the end of four years the electorate will say whether the Government has done a good job. It is not the business of this House to pass every single measure back to the electorate for the electorate's decision. It is the Government's decision. The Government will stand or fall at the next election based on their program and their ability to pass their program.

At the start of this session, going back almost three years, we discussed the reform of Parliament. So far we have brought in the relatively easy measures. I suggest that we wait no longer, that we get rid of this ridiculous procedure that we have at the present time. We can allow extended debate. That is not an issue. I do not mind if we debate all night, but at the end of a fixed period of time, say a maximum two days of extended debate, we should come to a decision on a particular stage of the Bill, whether it be second reading, report stage or third reading. On that basis, there will be a minimum of six days of extended debate on any Bill. But the Government would know that that is the limit. It would not have to go through the ridiculous process we are going through this afternoon.

I plead with the Opposition, if they feel that they want to form the Government of this country, to recognize that the Government must govern. It must get its program through. Stop this nonsense. We expect the NDP to try to hinder this type of social legislation, but with the approval of Her Majesty's Official Opposition, we would come to an agreement and that would be the end of it.

Mr. Geoff Scott (Hamilton-Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, you may find this hard to believe. I had to go back and check my figures. However, this is the fifteenth time that this Government has brought down the guillotine during this current session of Parliament. On this day, the four hundred and forty-fourth sitting day of this thirty-second Parliament, we are well into the longest session in Canadian history. At that, the Government is averaging one time allocation foreclosure motion every 30 days, one a month. What this Government wants to do, as stated by Members opposite, is to bring a matter to a vote. They make the decision when the matter shall come to a vote, so they bring down the guillotine. I find this a shocking abuse of parliamentary democracy.

The Hon. Member who just spoke said that we should get rid of this ridiculous procedure. Let us get rid of the right of the Opposition to tell the Government that it is wrong when it tries to close off debate. The President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Gray), about two weeks ago, now that they average closure once every two weeks, called our opposition to choking off Parliament irrelevant. I call this sickening procedure dictatorial, pure and simple.

Not only does the Government persist in cutting off debate every time it presents obviously bad legislation, but with the recent time allocation just before Christmas with respect to the Canagrex Bill, they really outdid themselves. They moved time allocation on report stage and third reading at the same time. Now suggestions are coming from the other side of the House that we should have lumped Bills C-131, 132 and 133 into an

omnibus Bill and brought down the closure motion on all of them at the same time. It would be like the omnibus energy Bill on which we had to resort to extraordinary measures to get the Government to act in a democratic way.

What really seems so unnecessary is the way the Government treats the parliamentary Opposition. I guess it can only be explained by the Liberal legislators' fear that their Bills will be exposed for the poorly drafted, badly executed pieces of legislation that they really are.

In the case of Canagrex, while there are still some clauses which are meeting with strong opposition, particularly from some of my western Canada colleagues, the proposed Canagrex Bill had had time to be absorbed by those who will be affected by it. Its exposure during the Christmas-New Year's recess, resulted in greater understanding and acceptability of Canagrex, as the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) and the farmers have been learning.

The point is that some of these pieces of legislation need a good deal of airing both in this House and across the country. Yes, they take time. However, the Government gets upset when there is mounting concern across the country about an issue that the Government cannot justify. Then it brings down the guillotine.

This is why there is an opposition in a parliamentary democracy. I know the Government does not believe in an opposition. They will get to understand what opposition is when we form the Government. That is why we are here, waiting until we can form the Government. I am talking now about Official Opposition, of course.

This Government, under the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has always regarded Parliament as a nuisance and MPs as nobodies 50 feet away. Indeed, the Liberal Cabinet regards MPs as nobodies in this Chamber, including their own Members of Parliament.

Many of my colleagues have dealt with the substantive aspects, the downright niggling, unfair aspects of Bill C-131. I firmly believe this time allocation measure will be regarded by senior citizens across this country as one more nail in the coffin of this Liberal administration. Any MP who votes for this measure to close it off, to choke it off and go for riding on the backs of our senior citizens will, I suspect, find their own contract with the voters annihilated come the next federal election.

What they are doing is using a procedural motion to reduce the income of senior citizens. As I said, my very real concern is the astounding frequency with which this arrogant and dictatorial Government sees fit to lower the boom on this and all manner of other pieces of legislation.

I confess that in the interests of an efficient Parliament, allocation of time properly used is not altogether bad. An agreement between all Parties might make time allocation desirable for certain pieces of legislation, but is it a proper use of this motion to cut off debate on an issue that will do a great deal of harm to a great many people in this country? I can