

Time Allocation

• (1520)

Here is another example. A 30-year old making \$30,000 will have part of her OAS pension clawed back when she retires at the age of 65.

The same is true for 35-year olds making \$35,000 a year, for 40-year olds making \$40,000 a year, and for 45-year olds making \$45,000 a year.

This is where the end of the universality program attacks a growing number of seniors in our society as time goes on. All told—and the government knows this, which is why it is not saying a darn word today—the clawback will catch about 128,000 Canadian pensioners in 1990. In 20 years from now that figure will rise to over one million Canadians. Where is this process of universality? Where are the government members standing up and saying: “Universality is a sacred right in this country”? We have on the old age security program more and more seniors coming under attack.

Is it any wonder that at national conferences across this country when seniors get together they talk about how this government is hitting them harder and harder with every single move that it makes? It is happening on this old age security program, on VIA Rail that transports them from one place to another, and on the GST which attacks almost everything that they buy and reduces their buying power.

I am appalled that this government wants to oppose closure and does not want to talk about the legislation here in order to give Canadians the opportunity to hear what we have to say. I am appalled that I have to stand here today and talk to them about this, but I know it is the only way that Canadians across the country will know exactly what those people across the way are thinking and doing, because obviously they are not interested in communicating that message themselves.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, once again I rise in this House to address the issue of closure. It seems that it is becoming such a habit with the government opposite that it appears to have embarked on a one-party quest to change the rules of the House of Commons.

I would say that this party, the Conservative party, was a party of parliamentary reform. When it came into office in 1984 the Conservatives said how much Parli-

ment needed to be reformed. They had been in opposition for decades and had all kinds of ideas on how Parliament would be improved. They instituted a series of reforms that Your Honour knows about. We are now faced with a situation where instead of living up to the spirit of those reforms and following through with them they are going back to the old closure rules that they condemned so vigorously when they were in opposition and which they now use willy-nilly on almost every bill that comes along.

I see the hon. member for Macleod is grinning. He should be red-faced with shame at the constant use of closure that this government has embarked on in this House. I want to make some reference to this.

I think the record is a broken record, a dreadful record. This government has used closure in this Parliament already, and we have not yet been sitting for a full year from when we started last December. The government has used closure more than any other government in any other Parliament in Canadian history. Not by one or two times more; it is almost double the number of times. I think it is at 11 on closure, and that this is the second or third time we have had time allocation. That is not counting the fancy suspension of the standing orders we have had: one on the bill last week and one on the free trade bill a year ago in December.

That is the kind of record that most governments would be terribly embarrassed about. Instead, this government goes on with its dictatorial ways trampling on the rights of Parliament right, left and centre.

I want to go through the history of its dealings on this particular bill. The bill was introduced following the budget and was given first reading on June 20 this year. It was called for second reading on October 11. I would like to remind you, Madam Speaker, that the House adjourned on June 27 last summer and, at the request of the government, we did not meet again until September 25, a full two weeks later than the rules would normally have provided.

If the government were that concerned about getting this bill passed, surely it would not have allowed an extra two weeks of holidays, as they are called, for members of Parliament to be away from this place. Surely it would have called Parliament back promptly.

Mr. McDermid: Holidays?