

*Income Tax Act*

been discussed. But why closure? Who will be hurt if the bill is not made law by the first of the year? What difference will it make if it is delayed a day, a week, a month or even a year as most provinces want? Who will be hurt? The answer is, only the egos of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance, nothing else, and that is just about it. I know one can see members over there "laughing and scratching" about our complaints concerning the bill being pushed through by closure just the same as the Liberal members did in the pipeline debate. Nothing has changed, only the faces. They all laughed and said that the public think it is great. It is strange that some of the members as well as the Minister of Finance have pretty short memories. Look at what happened to the government of that day under the Right Hon. C. D. Howe. Mr. Howe had little regard for the parliamentary process but had a good deal of ability in many other ways, which is more than can be said for this outfit. The same thing happened—

• (3:50 p.m.)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière):** Mr. Speaker, the most glaring error this government is making is to believe that the Canadian Parliament is a tool that it can manipulate as it wishes if it is in its own interest.

Mr. Speaker, some may find these words rather harsh, but I say very frankly they are fundamentally true. On account of the opposition's frustration, Canadians are presently living a very sad moment, namely the downfall of a government which replaces dynamism, efficiency and imagination in its bills by force and haste to have them passed in order to avoid too much criticism. In short, the quicker the tax reform bill is passed, the less time people will have to say what they think about it, and the quicker they will have to swallow it.

Some government members spoke on the motion under Standing Order 75C this afternoon, but not one succeeded in raising a point which would have prompted me to support the motion.

Mr. Speaker, the members of the opposition are charged—the hon. member for Brome-Missisquoi (Mr. Forest) did so a while ago—with filibustering. As a result of the alleged filibuster by the opposition, the government goes to the other extreme—provided there is such a filibuster—and is taking a drastic step, closure.

It would perhaps be appropriate, Mr. Speaker, to ask ourselves what a filibuster is. In my opinion, even if my knowledge on the matter is quite limited, a filibuster is a kind of voluntary and excessive delay of House proceedings to the extent that any progress is practically impossible. A filibuster means to me that nothing works in Parliament and that the loss of time or lack of progress are not in the interests of Parliament, the government or the people.

On the basis of the definition, what is happening in the House? Is there a filibuster?

[Mr. Nesbitt.]

If it were proved to me that I or anyone else have been filibustering, I would agree with invoking closure because I do believe in Parliament and the efficiency of the member's role.

But, Mr. Speaker, that is not the case. There has been no filibustering in this House since the start of this debate. There have been many speeches, at times useless, such as we heard this afternoon. You seemed impatient, Mr. Speaker, and, believe me, I shared your impatience.

But, when we start a job, be it a tax reform bill, a bill on invoking the war measures act, a bill on the reorganization of the government or any other bill, what is its evolution, what are the various stages, outside those provided for by the procedure?

First of all, this bill came to hon. members for a preliminary study. Then, according to the procedure, there are different stages. Once the bill has been analysed and examined closely, members of all parties are called upon to move amendments. Once all this has been done time has come for adoption of the bill. One thinks about carrying the bill only after the members have had time to study, to examine closely, to analyse and to try to improve it by amendments.

However, since we began to discuss this bill the government did not accept any amendment from the opposition. Last week we moved an amendment in favour of small income people. In any event, it is for those people that the members of the Social Credit Party are in this House. The purpose of our amendment was to give workers, farmers and small income people generally the same rights as professionals enjoy, that is, that they be allowed to deduct part of the cost of their equipment, as the latter is absolutely essential to them if they are to make a living.

What happened, Mr. Speaker? Because of an archaic, ridiculous procedure, the vote taken in committee of the whole was a bingo. Because of this procedure, some government members voted against the proposals. Then they turn around and tell us that Créditiste and other opposition members accomplish a useless task, that they filibuster and waste everybody's time. Our main duty as members, what we are paid for, is to see to it that bills serve the best interest of Canadians. This is why we moved an amendment.

Today, closure is brought in, and we are told: You have no right to move an amendment, you are delaying business of the House.

Mr. Speaker, either we believe in Parliament, or we do not. If we do have faith in Parliament, we shall accept positive amendments coming from either side of the House.

As for me, I am interested in considering any amendment coming from the government and I have examined with interest those brought forward by the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson). But why should the opposition demonstrate such an honest and objective attitude towards what emanates from the government whereas government members consider whatever comes from the opposition to be wrong. Why? Because the government has no faith in Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, the government consider that closure is the best way for them to avoid debate and improve their bills.