

Government Orders

passage of this particular bill. The bill is at the second reading stage. It has had just a little over two hours debate at this point, but obviously there is much work to be done and much discussion needed yet and we, as a government, are anxious to proceed with those discussions and those debates. We look forward to doing just that because we believe it is an issue that the Canadian public is concerned about and wants to see a decision of this House.

Bill C-78 is an act dealing with the environment. Of course, Mr. Speaker, I do not have to tell you or anybody in this House that that is very much a topical issue, an issue of a great deal of concern to Canadian people. At the second reading stage of that particular bill we had nearly 13 hours of debate, spread over some six days here in the House of Commons. This is an issue that the Canadian public and the Canadian taxpayers want us to work on now. They want us to discuss the issue of the environment. They are anxious for this House to pronounce itself on things such as the green plan and the legislative agenda that the government has put forward through Bill C-78 and other vehicles.

Bill C-82 is an act to amend an act to provide for the appointment of a port warden for the harbour of Quebec.

In some ways, this probably demonstrates best the need for this particular motion that we have before us. In fact, what happened on Bill C-82 is that on November 5, 1990, the House took exactly 45 minutes to debate second reading.

Of course, as you or anyone who watches the House regularly would know, Mr. Speaker, it then went on to committee. It returned to the House on December 14 for the report stage and third reading. It took exactly two minutes of House time because the House supported the thrust of what was going on here.

The House was ready to decide. As a result of that, to reinstate the bill and all those stages would unnecessarily delay a bill for which the House had already indicated a pretty strong degree of support.

By proceeding with this motion, I think we are doing the taxpayer and Canadians in general a favour.

Bill C-85, the last one in the motion, is an act to provide for certain matters respecting official languages, employees' pensions and labour relations, et cetera. At second reading stage to this point, there has been a total of four hours and 45 minutes on this issue.

There are several important stages before the members of this House that we are going to have to continue in the debate relating to this bill. We have the full committee stage. We have an issue that is important not only to members but to a number of employees, employers and people across the country who are very concerned about this issue.

What we are asking by way of this motion is that this particular bill can continue at the stage it was at, which is either at the end of second reading or just having completed second reading and being ready to go on to committee.

We are anxious, as a government and as members on this side of the House, to get that issue before the committee, to discuss it, to look at whatever amendments may be necessary, and we look forward to doing just that.

I want to conclude my remarks by saying that at the moment we have before us some five bills, all of which are important to the Canadian public and to members of this House of Commons. I would hope that we could proceed with this motion as quickly as possible.

The government does not want to in any way tie up the time of the House or to waste taxpayers' money, but rather it wants us to spend our time debating the substantive issues, which are these particular bills. They would be reinstated at the stage they were at prior to prorogation on the successful completion and adoption of the motion before the House at this time.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I have listened with considerable interest to the parliamentary secretary. I must say that we participate in this debate on the substance of the motion with some degree of reluctance.

I think one could refer to our participation as participation under duress. There is quite a cloud, in my view, hanging over this Chamber today. We have had a motion, the procedure of which has been questioned by many