

*Government Orders*

the king cannot come in to Parliament. That has been a rule of Parliament for many years.

When the Privy Councillors do something like they have done here today, representing the king—we have a new king, by the way, and we know who the new king is—they, as representing the king, are telling Parliament how it will structure its work. From their perspective, from the king's perspective, from the Privy Council's perspective, Parliament is an obstacle.

• (1940)

It is at best a means to an end, but usually it is an obstacle. I do not blame the government for viewing Parliament as an obstacle. Its job is to propose legislation and get it through the House.

What is really happening, and I know it was discussed earlier, is that the bills the government is proposing to be revived are, as I speak now and as things were yesterday and last week, dead. They did not exist except in the history books. The government is saying is that it wishes to take those bills that are dead and bring them into this Parliament and revive them just as they were before they were dead.

In addition, we are discussing closure here tonight. Closure is not the issue. It adds insult to injury that in making this proposal the government wishes to do it by closure. As ugly as closure is, it is not the closure issue I am discussing here. It is the concept of reviving bills that are dead.

Maybe some of this is my fault, and I will explain this in a minute. Maybe it is the fault of some of the other members that this has occurred. I recall about six or eight months ago proposing for discussion that private members' bills be revived in a new session of Parliament. There was a lot of favourable response to that at the time and there were reasons I made that proposal, but I will not go into that now. At the time one of the objections was that it could not be done because in a new session the old bills are all dead. The government bills, the private members' bills, and the motions are dead. They cannot be revived. It is a sacred principle. It cannot be done.

I did not accept it as a principle that could not be looked at again. I still do not say that the government could not re-address that principle, could not look at it more closely. I think we should in Parliament. We have an obligation to rethink the processes here. We are in a

period of reform constitutionally. There is no reason we cannot rethink processes here in Parliament.

Now it is eight months later and the same people who told me it could not be done, that private members' bills could not be carried over, have now come to this House, and with the concurrence of the Speaker, are saying they can and will revive dead bills. Somebody has it wrong somewhere. Maybe I got it wrong then and maybe I have it wrong now, but I do not think so. I think the government has it wrong now.

There are five bills. One of them, Bill C-73, was in the last session a miscellaneous privatization bill. I spoke in the House, as did my colleagues on both sides of the House, and that bill died. As we began this session there was a sense that maybe there was some interest, some good reason to revive a bill that had gone a great distance in the House, had basically gone through the system and at the present time was capable of obtaining unanimous consent in the House for reintroduction. That consent was had.

Bill C-73 happens to be listed among the bills in this motion. I know the Speaker has deleted it from this motion because Bill C-73 has already been disposed of. That was all done with unanimous agreement. A few days ago I thought it looked rather good for Parliament to be able to get something like that done in isolation. Was I surprised to show up here in Ottawa last night to see what the government had done with this motion.

What is wrong with what the government has done? I will try to articulate it again.

The bill is dead. The five bills are dead and do not exist. We have rules in this House that regulate how we do our business. The whole system of rules includes the business of first reading, second reading, third reading, referral to a committee where appropriate and other procedures. Those procedures have been in existence for time immemorial; certainly since the beginning of this Parliament.

Those rules are in place. I do not know whether they are sacred rules, but they are real rules that we have followed forever in this House.

In view of the principle I read earlier in Beauchesne's about the need to protect the minority—that is not just the minority here but all minorities—how can the government proceed as if it did not matter and it was just another item of business? What if the government was to propose tomorrow that 10 new bills be simply adopted