

The Constitution

brought on closure. If one looks at the record, one will find there was a total of 86 minutes, or one hour and 26 minutes, in the full 24 hours of this debate devoted to questions of privilege and points of order. That is really not very much time. If that is one of the reasons for bringing on closure, it is an absolute fraud.

It has been argued that there is a crisis in the country. The crisis is in the minds of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and those around him who perceive the difficulties in the country as a crisis. There is no crisis in the minds of the people outside. In my eight years as a member of Parliament—and I know many members have been here longer—I have never had a constituent ask when the Constitution of Canada would be changed or tell me that it should be changed.

An hon. Member: You ought to travel with Gene.

Mr. Kempling: He encounters it outside of the country. The hon. member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia) participated in the debate the other day. It was a good, measured speech, but he left the impression that the four million or so immigrants who have come to Canada since 1945 are demanding that the charter of rights be written into the constitution. I cannot believe that people who came here from Uganda, Chile, Poland, Hungary, India, Tibet, the Caribbean, Viet Nam, Great Britain, any country in the western world or the mid-east, are asking for a charter of rights to be put in the constitution. That is just not so. They came here because we offered a better form of government, a better livelihood and more security than they ever had in the countries they left.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kempling: They came here from dictatorships. They recognized that there was freedom here. I do not think one of them came here with a burning desire in his gut to change the constitution of Canada. That is a fraud as well.

● (0040)

We have expressed our views on closure and our concerns about the committee stage. We have heard members opposite say: put this debate to the committee. Members on this side have expressed their views on that aspect to some extent. But why are we reluctant to see it go into committee without having our full say? The reason is that we have watched how the committee system in this House works over the years. We have watched the way in which those experts on the other side have manipulated the committees of the House of Commons. I would ask you, sir, to sit in a committee of the House of Commons and watch them play the game of the clock. You know how that is done. The minister appearing before the committee arrives a few minutes late, which takes up ten minutes. Then the chairman decides to read a report of the standing committee and that goes on for another ten or 15 minutes. Then the minister reads an opening statement which can take another ten or 15 minutes. Maybe the minister's assistant is with him and he will be asked by the minister if he wants to make a statement. That goes on for yet another ten or

15 minutes. Then with the points of order and the general razzmatazz back and forth, the next thing you know an hour of a two-hour committee meeting is over. That is what we are afraid of. That is why we want to know the terms which will govern the committee. That is why we are asking that the committee proceedings be televised. That is why we want it broadcast—so they cannot play games, so they cannot play the game of the committee.

We have watched it, sir. We have seen committees of the House of Commons sit knowing that a member from our side was to propose an amendment. Before he could do so, the government members left the committee so that there would no longer be a quorum. We have watched that game being played and that is why we are concerned that this committee should receive the proper attention it deserves.

Members opposite have suggested that this measure is like an ordinary bill, that we have first reading, second reading and then reference to committee, after which it comes back for report stage and third reading upon which debate continues. We do not believe this. The government House leader has not told us how long the debate will go on after the report comes back to the House. He will not say.

Mr. Pinard: There is no limit.

Mr. Kempling: Now he says there is no limit.

Mr. Clark: But there will be closure again.

Mr. Kempling: That is right. We know there will be closure again. We know the games they play. We know what to look for. We have tried to the best of our ability in this debate to expose the games they play so that the people of Canada will see the way they manipulate the business of the House.

The other point I wish to make is that very few people in Canada have read the British North America Act. There is hardly a person in the country who has read the reference which is before the House. So you have a population which does not know the act, does not know the reference, but which is being persuaded by subliminal advertising, in many cases, to urge their members of Parliament to amend the constitution. That is a fraud.

What the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) and my colleagues on this side of the House have been asking is that the committee be allowed to travel across Canada to hear the views of Canadians, those Canadians who do not know what is in the BNA Act, who do not know what is in the resolution which is before the House. That is what we want. We have put an amendment forward which would allow the committee to travel so that Canadians in all parts of Canada can be heard. That matter has yet to be ruled on but I do not have much confidence that our requests will be agreed to.

We have this matter before us now, a motion to refer a proposed resolution to committee. And we know the games they play in committee. The subject matter which is being discussed is not broadly understood across the country by the