

Government Orders

Therefore, for me to identify with the people of Newfoundland is not difficult. I understand the sense of urgency and the sense of importance which they attach to this project. For a long time they have wanted an opportunity to develop their economy and to demonstrate the kinds of skills and abilities that they have within their population.

So, it is a bill that has important to us and a bill that all of us want very much to see proceed. I am quite disappointed that, through the processes of presenting petitions and forcing votes on first reading of a bill, the Opposition has managed to delay the proceedings of the House on Bill C-44. Of course, that does have a direct impact on the people of Newfoundland, because we know that delays can be costly and, at a time when things like oil and oil prices are so volatile because of the situation in the Middle East, all of us are very much concerned about what is going on. With that in mind, pursuant to Standing Order 26(1), I move:

That this House continue to sit to complete the business now before it.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The House has heard the terms of the motion moved by the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons. Will those members who object to the motion please rise in their places.

And more than 15 members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 26(2), the motion is deemed to have been withdrawn.

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, the motion being debated at the moment is one that would cut off debate on Bill C-44. Bill C-44 is that bill that neither creates nor particularly furthers the Hibernia project; Bill C-44 is that bill which provides for federal investment in the Hibernia project.

Before dealing briefly with the merits of the investment structure outlined in Bill C-44, I would like to note that we are again debating whether or not to continue debate at all. We are debating a government motion to turn off the lights on the debate on Hibernia.

The government says this has to be done. "It is a dirty job but someone has to do it, the government claims",

because all kinds of time has been wasted on it and if time continues to be wasted on it, then the project itself may be in peril.

I used to work in Edmonton with a small group of people. We worked for Grant Notley. One of them had a colourful metaphor that she applied to certain qualities and classes of argument. She referred to this class of argument with the metaphor "*el toro pooh-pooh*".

The arguments we have been hearing with regard to the wastage of time from the government, the arguments we have been hearing about the frailty of the project—the project itself being destroyed if we take more than a day to debate Bill C-44—bring to mind that colourful metaphor, *el toro pooh-pooh*.

An hon. member: Unparliamentary.

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): I have checked in Beauchesne. It is not ruled out.

In total, two minutes were spent on introduction and first reading of Bill C-44. That was on November 7, 1989, eleven months ago. Second reading got under way on December 18 when 61 minutes, an hour and a bit, were spent. Then it was dropped. Not because of the opposition, the opposition was not standing around saying "by gosh, you bring back Hibernia and we will make your life hell". No, the government just sort of dropped it as if it exited into the ether with not so much as a thought following it until February 9 when we spent two hours on it on second reading. We were then up to the horrendous total of three hours in second reading debate on a bill which, when passed, will see the authorization of an expenditure of federal public funds up to in excess of \$3 billion.

This was not to be all because that perfidious opposition demanded yet further discussion of Bill C-44. So, on June 7—from February 9 to March, to April, to May, to June 7, four months later, again at the sole discretion of the government—the bill was brought back once more and debated for about two and a half hours, at which time it was passed after a total of five and a half hours of debate; hardly tortuous. The entire second reading was spread by the government over more than half a year, then it passed. Then it went to committee. Would you like to know what horrible, gruesome delay the opposition imposed on this bill in committee? I can tell you. I was there. We whistled it through in a day.