

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
ON THE CONSTITUTION (AMENDMENT) BILL
AT THE DEWAN RAKYAT ON 25TH APRIL,
1960

Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I beg to move—

That the following provisions shall apply to the remaining proceedings on the Constitution (Amendment) Bill—

- (a) The proceedings in Committee shall be brought to a conclusion upon the expiration of the period of four hours from the time of committal of the Bill to Committee;
- (b) The proceedings on the Report and Third Reading shall be brought to a conclusion upon the expiration of the period of half an hour from the conclusion of the proceedings in Committee;
- (c) For the purpose of bringing to a conclusion any proceedings on the Bill the Chairman or Mr Speaker may allot a maximum time to be given for the clauses of the **Bill**;
- (d) For the purpose of bringing to a conclusion any proceedings on the Bill which are to be brought to a conclusion at the time appointed by this Order, and which have not previously been brought to a **conclusion**, the Chairman or Mr Speaker shall, at the time so appointed or allotted, put forthwith any Question already proposed from the Chair, and any amendments or new clauses.
- (e) Nothing in this Order **shall**—
 - (i) prevent any proceedings to which this Order applies from being taken or completed earlier than is required by this Order; or
 - (ii) prevent any business from being proceeded with in accordance with Standing Orders if the proceedings under this Order have been **completed**.

Now, Sir, the object of this motion is simple. It is to ensure that this Bill is passed today after allowing reasonable time for debate, in addition to the long time we have had already, and that the passage is not interrupted merely for the sake of interrupting.

Now, Sir, the reason for this motion is also simple. Although the Government was prepared to allow from Friday to Monday for the passage of this Bill in view of its importance, we have only just completed the motion for the Second Reading and it is obvious that certain Members of the Opposition intend to delay the Bill by every means that they can contrive within the framework of Standing Orders. This became clear, Sir, when the Honourable Member for Dato Kramat and the Honourable Member for Pasir Mas Hulu introduced their motions on Friday and Saturday. One would have expected, Sir, following good parliamentary practice that the first motion having been rejected the second motion, which has the same effect as the first motion," was unnecessary. But the Members of the Opposition decided to bring this second motion all the same, obviously with the intention of delaying the passage of this Bill. Now, Sir, the Honourable Member for Ipoh places this intention beyond doubt by stating in so many words on Saturday. The Government takes this warning very seriously because whatever we think about the defects of certain Members of the Opposition we have never thought them defective in cunning. Sir, it is obvious that the Opposition has had ample opportunity to raise all points of substance which they have on this Bill. These points affect only half a dozen of the 36 clauses and the most important of these is of course Clause 28, and this clause is merely an enabling clause.

Now, legislation to give effect to the powers conferred will be brought before this House for detailed consideration at a later meeting. It is clear, Sir, as I have said, that the Opposition have had time for full expression of their views. They are now resorting to delaying tactics. Now I suggest that these negative and unproductive tactics are wasting the time of Parliament and the time of the Government. Therefore, in face of this threat of obstruction, the Government is justified in adopting this recognised counter-measure to such a threat in introducing what is commonly known as the guillotine procedure. And most Members know that the "guillotine" here is meant in a strictly parliamentary sense. Most

Honourable Members will be aware, and I make this point only for the benefit of those who may not know, that this procedure has been a recognised feature of parliamentary government in the United Kingdom over fifty years. It has been used a dozen times in the House of Commons since 1930 by both Labour and Conservative Governments. It has only been used to defeat an attempt by the Opposition such as this Government is facing today. The procedure has been recognised and adopted as occasions demand in other Commonwealth countries. Therefore, I submit there is ample authority and precedents for its introduction under Standing Order 100.

Now, Sir, no Government likes to introduce a motion of this kind and this Government is no exception, but our hands have been forced by the Opposition and we are satisfied that there is justification for adopting this procedure on this occasion for the reasons which I have stated. In taking this step, our minds are clear because of the knowledge that the Opposition will have had, by the time this Bill is passed, ample opportunity—and the public and the Press will have had adequate opportunity—to express their views. And what is more, in accordance with our bi-cameral system, this Bill will then go forward for another debate in the Dewan Negara. There will therefore be a further opportunity for Members of the Upper House, the Dewan Negara, to express their views and also for the public to express their reaction to this Bill.

Sir, I beg to move.