

Extension of Sittings

And again we have been discussing free trade for three years. It is about time that we decide to move. When I saw the NDP House Leader (Mr. Broadbent) tear out the Standing Orders the other day, I was shocked. To a new Member of Parliament like me, the Standing Orders and parliamentary customs and tradition are absolutely sacred and must be respected. We are not here to give a show but to see to the collective well-being of our fellow citizens. And I am proud to be part of a team which has decided to move, to do something tangible.

Indeed, the turmoil aroused by the motion to suspend the rules makes me laugh since that motion is far from being strict and tough enough. Under that motion, discussions can go on every day till midnight, and we are being accused of gagging the Opposition. On the contrary, who has been preventing the House from discussing free trade since the beginning of the week? Our friends opposite! They have been preventing us from discussing free trade through all sorts of dilatory tactics. Let us take a concrete example. This week, when the Minister for International Trade (Mr. Crosbie), the Hon. Member for Newfoundland, tabled the legislation, they asked for a vote. As we know, there usually is no vote on first reading in order to speed up the process. But our friends opposite have been asking for registered votes, all the time wasting time, half hours at a time in the halls, although we could have used that precious time to discuss the substance of the matter. So, we could not discuss free trade. This is why I feel that our friends opposite are somewhat hypocritical. I apologize for saying that, Mr. Speaker. This may be an unparliamentary term. Perhaps you will ask me to withdraw, but I feel compelled to say they are being hypocritical, bleached sepulchres.

On this side of the curtains they say they want to discuss free trade, but behind the curtains they are using every means to prevent us from discussing free trade. I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, but I find that disgusting.

I am reminded of an old latin saying I learned during my classical studies. I wonder if some of us remember those latin sentences. We used to have that beautiful saying *Roma locuta, causa finita*: Rome has spoken, the matter is settled. It was used in the Roman Catholic Church to mean that once the Pope had decided, the matter was settled. But in politics, the people are the pope, and once the people have spoken the matter is settled. We have no time to waste. And I can tell you something, Mr. Speaker. I did not speak much about

free trade at the beginning of my campaign. But we know what the TV debate did. It spurred us on. Personally, I talked about free trade almost day and night. One of my most rewarding experiences during the election campaign was a conversation I had in the wee hours of the night around a table with about a dozen workers of Abitibi Paper, a superb industry in my riding which exports 95 per cent of its production to the United States. These workers who had been brainwashed by their union against free trade were certainly delighted to get explanations! When this brotherly meeting was over, these people were glad to know what the deal was all about.

During the election campaign, I noticed that the more we explained free trade to the people, the more they were in favour of it and understood that better economic relations with the United States are the key to progress in Quebec and the rest of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, dear friends, I will conclude with this. If I joined this Party—I must tell you that it was very difficult for me to decide to join a political party. As a newspaperman I was impartial. I kept my distances. You must realize that it was very important for me to keep my distances with the political parties. When I joined the Conservative Party, it was a matter of choice, because believe it or not, the Liberals had asked me to be a candidate for them. I had an opportunity to join either side.

An Hon. Member: You made the right choice.

Mr. DeBlois: The main reason was the leadership of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney).

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. DeBlois: The greatest quality of a leader is his ability to act. The Parties opposite would like to paralyze us . . . quite the contrary! The time to talk is over. The people have spoken, and I am anxious to address other issues. We have been considering this matter for three years. The time has come to deal with something else. Canadians and Quebecers have other issues to deal with, other solutions to seek, and I am anxious to move on to something else. I feel the matter is settled and I hope the Opposition will finally understand that the issue is settled, now that the people have spoken.

I conclude by saying how proud I am to belong to that great family of the Progressive Conservative Party. I will have an opportunity, next week, to say much more about the benefits of free trade for the small businesses, the workers, the farmers and the whole population of the