

Government Orders

This brings me to another issue I would like to talk about from this Bill S-9, which is directly related to the concerns of the Liberal member for Gander—Grand Falls, who very eloquently raised his objections to this bill at the Standing Committee on Finance. As I understand, having done a little more homework, this member has been watching this issue and this bill for a very long time. I found out that when in opposition he basically criticized the Conservative government for moving in this direction and moving toward this kind of a deal. In fact he questioned the government of the day on this quite a bit.

The history of Bill S-9 goes back prior to our getting it on our desks and saying we should pass the bill. The bill goes back to the Mulroney government. The member for Gander—Grand Falls had the job and unique duty to critique this item, as he did. Based on that and based on being in opposition to it at that time, he feels obligated to continue that opposition to it at this time.

I bring this point out to show there is at least one Liberal who sticks to his Liberal convictions. There is one Liberal who keeps his promise. There is one Liberal who does not break the promises in the red book.

• (1650)

Mr. Benoit: He did not vote against this though.

Mr. Silye: I believe when it comes to the vote he will have to be very careful how he handles himself. Perhaps he might have a cold or something. We certainly would not want the member to be in trouble with his party, since that whip is cracking pretty hard over there, as evidenced by the last sitting.

Some of the issues the member for Gander—Grand Falls pointed out are based on his personal crusade against the bill. He has taken a lot of effort and looked into it. He does believe that because it means less revenue for Canada it is wrong. He does believe it is a tax system for the rich. He does point out that the Reform Party and the Bloc Québécois support it, as we do. Yet he never says openly, aggressively, that the Liberal government now supports it as well.

Perhaps when he has his intervention on the bill, because I am sure he wants to speak to it and address it as well, he would maybe tell us on this side of the House why it is that when they were in opposition and the Prime Minister and his group were over here this member was attacking the bill at the time, with their blessing obviously, with the finance minister's encouragement, with the leader of the party's encouragement. Why when they are on the other side of the House all of a sudden did they flip? Do they become puppets of the bureaucracy? Do they become puppets of the bureaucrats? Do they have to say yes to what those people tell them to do? When they were over here

they criticized it. They are over there and now they are endorsing it.

It now takes one lone voice, one lonely voice in that huge pack of 177 members over there to remind them that when they were over here they were not for this thing, they were not for the bill. They did not want to do reciprocity with the States like this. They were against stuff like that. They were against NAFTA. They were against all these things. Now they are for all this.

I do not understand. I do not mean to be taking the member for Gander—Grand Falls to task. In a way I am giving him a compliment, but in another way—

Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood) You are dangerous. You are not fooling anybody.

Mr. Silye I also point out that there are inconsistencies here. I will compliment the member for being consistent. However I will criticize his party for being inconsistent.

The rest of the items on the bill I have covered. We do support it. I did have some time to talk about it, and I did feel it was important that as the representative for our party on the bill and as a supporter of the bill for our party I should set some of the record straight. I have to sort of pre-empt the member for Gander—Grand Falls, because I am sure he is going to say a few other words.

The intent of the bill and what it does accomplish is what the future of the country holds. We have to negotiate with other countries. We have to be creating a level playing field. We have to have taxation levels that are similar. We have to have reciprocity agreements that make the deals both ways. As the flow of capital and human resources goes back and forth, all around the world, as we push buttons on a computer and transfer large sums of money, just as an entry item on a ledger sheet, we have to be able to be competitive. First and foremost, that is what Bill S-9 does, it keeps us competitive. It is only the small minded, the narrow minded people in the House who want to protect themselves who would argue that this is not a fair and good reciprocity agreement.

There is nothing for me to add to this. I know there was a lot of confusion. I hope I have cleared up some of that confusion, why our party supports it. I hope I have addressed those constituents of the member for Kamloops. Also I hope I have put to rest this business about picking on the rich all the time, because the rich do pay their fair share. I do not believe this is a bill that satisfies the rich, because I believe people who make between \$50,000 and \$100,000 and own property down in the States are not really wealthy in this day and age, to make \$60,000 or \$70,000. In that case, with \$64,000, plus the perks we get, everybody in this place would be rich. I would say that a lot of people in the House would not say they are rich.