

requires notice and advance planning. Quite frankly, I cannot imagine planning within a major business never knowing whether or not the business would be operating at a certain time of the year.

We instituted a parliamentary calendar so that Members of Parliament could make necessary arrangements, so that they could tell their constituents with conviction that they would be in their community or neighbourhood on a specified date. We have all done that. I am sure all our calendars are filled for July and August. In spite of the Standing Orders and the understanding which we have all had for the last few years, those appointments and commitments will have to be broken because we will be required to be here.

Why are we being asked to do this? We have sat for 11 months and the Government has had an opportunity to introduce its parliamentary agenda. The Government is today admitting that it is incompetent. It is admitting that it has not done its job.

The Government says it wants to debate child care. After the 1984 election there was a Throne Speech wherein the Government said that it planned to introduce a comprehensive child care program. That was in 1984. There was then a committee which made recommendations in 1986. Then it was 1987 and now it is 1988 and we still do not have any legislation before us. The Government says the Opposition is holding up its legislative agenda. Nothing could be further from the truth. We are anxious to debate child care. Where is the legislation? It is not yet introduced after four years of government.

We could say the same for other legislation. Where is the tax reform legislation? In 1984 we were promised tax reform. In 1985 we were promised tax reform, in 1986 we were promised tax reform, and in 1987 we were promised tax reform. It is now 1988 and we still do not have legislation before us to enable us to deal with tax reform.

Where is the legislation for the trade deal? The international trade treaty was signed on January 2, 1988. January went past, February, March, April and May, and here we are in June now being asked to debate the trade deal. I am not prepared to say that the opposition Parties are holding up important legislation. We must at least see the legislation before we can react to it.

I want to appeal to you, Mr. Speaker, as a servant of the House and an individual who is profoundly committed to the practices and traditions of this place. At this stage the Government is asking us to suspend the rules, to throw them out the window, to set aside that for which we worked for months and months to achieve with the unanimous consent of all Members of this House. The Government is now asking us to abandon that and saying that if we do not abandon that it will use the heavy hand of its majority to force it through, to force us to do this and force us to do that because the Government has a majority. Well, Mr. Speaker, that is not how the Standing Orders are developed.

Extension of Sittings

I appeal to you, Mr. Speaker, as a representative of all sides of the House, to rule against this initiative to suspend the Standing Orders of the House of Commons of Canada, to rule against this initiative by the Government to abandon the practices which we unanimously adopted only a few months ago.

I want to argue on two points, Mr. Speaker. I not only believe that the notice procedure for this motion was incorrect, as I have indicated, but also believe that the motion itself is a testament to the Government's general incompetence in the management of its legislative agenda. The fact that it has been unable to manage its legislative agenda properly is no reason for the Government to use the heavy hand of its huge majority to abandon the rules, practices, and traditions of this House.

I appeal to you, in the best interests of productivity, in the best interests of co-operation, and in the best interests of making the Parliament of Canada work for all the people of Canada, to consider this motion unacceptable and to rule against it.

Mr. Speaker: I have been listening very carefully to these arguments. I may as well say that I am not going to rule immediately. I may need some assistance from Hon. Members. I want to refer to a section of what we used to refer to as the British North America Act and now refer to as the Constitution Act. I refer to Section 49, and I know that other Members want to rise, and perhaps the Hon. Member for Windsor West (Mr. Gray) and the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis), may want to make some comments on this. Section 49 reads:

Questions arising in the House of Commons shall be decided by a Majority of Voices other than that of the Speaker, and when the Voices are equal, but not otherwise, the Speaker shall have a Vote.

I would be deeply indebted to Hon. Members or anyone else who could find for me any precedent which has dealt with what the meaning of that particular clause is and whether or not it might be of any assistance to me when I am trying to determine the issue which has been brought before me.

I do not put that out for immediate response. I put that out because I may very well want Hon. Members to see if they can give me some assistance on it.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I or others of my Party will be happy to respond to your invitation. I also want to give notice that, as you are raising Section 49 of the BNA Act, it would be useful also to consider the preamble of the BNA Act which says, to paraphrase, that its purpose was to create a country operating with a system similar in principle to that of Great Britain, and that also has implications.

Mr. Speaker: Again, also to help other Hon. Members, I have no difficulty in accepting that there ought to be some reason why the rules which we set for ourselves in this place ought to be abridged, changed, or otherwise. I do not have any difficulty accepting that premise on which I think the arguments I have heard are based. I am not taking away from any