

Extension of Sittings

Once we got off that little fallacy, that little fable about the Canadian Jobs Strategy, we had a new big fable put forward by the Prime Minister of Canada, who is the biggest fable-maker in the history of this country—

An Hon. Member: It is a big fib.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): The Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) makes Aesop look like a piker in comparison. Some day in the future there will be a new book for children entitled *Mulroney's Fairy-tales*.

What we heard today is another fairy-tale. We were told that the de Grandpré Commission will solve all of our problems. Earlier this week, the Prime Minister asked us to wait until Friday, when the answers would be forthcoming. Well, we are now at Friday, and still there are no answers.

An Hon. Member: Where are the answers?

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Where are the answers? Well, one answer was in a newspaper report which quoted the members of the commission as saying that they had no answers. The article quotes the commissioners as saying that they were not expected to report this soon; that they had made no commitment to table an interim report. It went on to quote them as saying that they may get around to presenting a report next June.

How many workers, Mr. Speaker, how many factories, how many communities are going to be adversely affected before the de Grandpré Commission gets around to reporting?

The only conclusion that our far-sighted Minister for International Trade (Mr. Crosbie) could come up with is: "Well, I met with the de Grandpré Commission this morning, and there is no problem out there. Nothing is happening out there".

Once again, like the giant Goodyear Blimp, the Minister for International Trade is floating high in the atmosphere, totally removed from the reality down here in the real world, where workers are today losing their jobs as a result of the Free Trade Agreement.

The Minister has a nice kitschy little breakfast with Mr. de Grandpré, with little china teacups and little *petit fours*, and they conclude that there is no problem out there.

An Hon. Member: The public trough.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): And after breakfast, they all get into their chauffeur-driven

limousines and are returned to the House of Commons, or Bell Canada, or wherever, and we hear: "Oh, no, there is no problem out there. No, no; no problem out there", except that the workers at Northern Telecom are being laid off, as are the workers at Canada Packers. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that those individuals do not have a chauffeur-driven limousine to take them to the UI counter, which is where they are going to be come Monday morning.

Because Mr. de Grandpré and the Minister for International Trade are unable to see a problem, there is no problem.

An Hon. Member: We were asked to let the people decide, and the people decided.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, Parliament must have the opportunity to exercise its right to examine these issues properly. The obdurate, dense Parliamentary Secretary opposite asks why Parliament should be given the opportunity to debate the issue fully. Well, that is the reason. It is only through Parliament that ordinary Canadians can exercise their right to be heard. It is only in this forum that ordinary Canadians can have their problems addressed.

An Hon. Member: Tories do not care.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, that is why this Government is moving closure; that is why this Government is proposing that the rules be suspended; that is why this Government is trying to shut this place down. It is a Government that is not interested in listening to ordinary Canadians. The great paranoia of Hon. Members opposite is that ordinary Canadians might in fact have the opportunity to be heard.

It is for that reason that we on this side are engaging in this debate. We are fighting for the right of Parliament to continue its work, to operate as a forum in which there can be an open, honest and clear dialogue on the issues facing Canadians.

In defending the rights of Parliament, Mr. Speaker, for that type of debate, we are defending the rights of all Canadians. Ordinary Canadians do not have access to the boardrooms of the nation. They do not have million dollar propaganda budgets. They do not have fancy high-powered friends. All they have is a democratically elected forum where their views can be put forth.