

whom I am proud to represent—young people, others not so young, entrepreneurs and builders who have confidence in themselves and who know that they can meet the challenge of free trade.

These are the same people, Madam Chairman, who have understood that only a strong, prosperous Canada can guarantee the viability of our social programs. And this very prosperity necessarily depends on implementing the Free Trade Agreement with our largest trading partner, the United States.

Thank you, Madam Chairman, and again, let me thank those who voted for me in Richelieu.

[English]

**Mr. Flis:** Madam Chairman, after a leave of absence of four years, it is indeed a great honour to speak in this Chamber again. I was looking forward to returning because in the four years I was absent the Members who served here brought in some excellent changes to the rules of the House.

For example, Private Members' Bills are getting to be much more important now, and I know of the work done on that by the Hon. Member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore. I know that parliamentary standing committees have been given much more authority and accountability. These are all positive steps in the right direction. The bells are much more pleasant to listen to, and that is a step in the right direction as well.

One thing that disturbed me very much upon returning was the fact that from day one the Government facing me has been closure crazy. It will not allow us to put amendments. It will not listen to what is being said. It will not listen to the new Members of Parliament who represent the people of Canada.

In 1981 when the Liberal Government brought in time allocation on a borrowing Bill, nothing so Draconian as closure but simply time allocation, the Minister for International Trade who introduced Bill C-2 to implement the Canada-U.S. FTA said:

What about closure, Mr. Speaker? We have just seen this government attempt to hijack the whole Canadian nation, not Parliament but our whole country, destroy the very consensus on which it is based by using their majority in this House to do things they were not authorized to do by the public. . . . They are not a legitimate government when they attempt to change the very nature of Canada—

Now who is changing the nature of Canada? Those were the words of the Hon. Minister for International Trade, but he wants to change the nature of Canada

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

without listening to the new Members of Parliament or to Canadians.

Directing the House Leader, of course, is none other than the Deputy Prime Minister. I used to have a very high respect for him, but let me tell Hon. Members what he said:

If we believe in parliamentary democracy and the right to freedom of speech, then we must ensure that the rights and privileges of Parliament are always secure.

By virtue of a closure motion today we have a further contempt for and erosion of the spirit and privileges of this institution. I believe tyranny begins when parliamentary debate ends.

He went on to say:

At the very outset I must say that I abhor this tactic. I find it offensive. I find it repugnant because it strikes at the basic fabric of our parliamentary democracy. Instead of having a parliamentary democracy we have what resembles a parliamentary dictatorship.

Who is the dictator today trying to force the most important Bill next to the Constitution through this House without allowing any amendments, bringing in closure every day since we have been here? Who is the dictator now?

• (2120)

I want to thank the people of Parkdale—High Park for re-electing me and sending me to speak on their behalf. My predecessor received a total of 34 per cent of the votes.

**Mr. McDermid:** What did you get?

**Mr. Flis:** And even those were votes won by intimidation, votes by third party advertising presidents sending letters to workers intimidating them to work for the Conservative Member. I have never seen an election with that kind of intimidation. It is a disgrace that the Tory Party would stoop to doing that.

I am here to represent my constituents. Before I got to Ottawa there were already letters on my desk awaiting me. Here is one from two of my constituents:

Dear Mr. Flis:

We are just two of the many Canadians who are very concerned about the future of this country. We do not believe that a majority of Canadian people want this deal passed, and an over fifty-per-cent vote against the Conservatives strengthens this belief.

Please continue to fight as loudly as you can against free trade. In a democratic society it is the majority who should decide and it is our opinion that a national referendum is the only true way to discover whether Canadians really want this deal passed. This issue, the future of Canada, is too important to allow Mr. Mulroney to assume a majority of consent of the Canadian people.