

As you carry out the will of the people and serve the national interest, may Divine Providence be your guide and inspiration.

[*English*]

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister) moved:

That the speech of Her Excellency the Governor General, delivered this day from the Throne to the two Houses of Parliament, be taken into consideration later this day.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt this motion?

[*English*]

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, there has been a long-standing practice of this House that the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne in fact is given on the day following the Throne Speech by Her Excellency the Governor General. It would seem with this initiative by the Right Hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) today that the Government is obviously making an effort to depart from this practice and is considering the fast tracking of the trade legislation.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Riis: I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that the Conservative Government is more interested in a Christmas vacation than in getting on and dealing properly with the legislation that will soon be before us.

Some Hon. Members: Order.

Ms. Copps: It is a legitimate debating point.

Mr. Riis: I want to say that four days after the general election the Hon. Member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent) sent a letter to the Prime Minister indicating that the New Democrats had a number of concerns regarding the decision of the Government to proceed so quickly. At that time—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: I would bring it to the attention of all Hon. Members that the Hon. Member for Kamloops has been recognized and has the floor. The Hon. Member.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, just four days after the general election the Hon. Member for Oshawa, the Leader of the New Democratic Party, sent a letter to the Prime Minister outlining some serious concerns that New Democrats had regarding the intentions of the Government to proceed so quickly.

Speech from the Throne

At the top of the list was the call for tandem legislation that would go along with this initiative to implement the trade treaty to protect those workers now numbering in the thousands who have lost their jobs as a result of this initiative.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Riis: There was also a request made to the Prime Minister that a committee of the House of Commons, or perhaps even a joint committee, be struck to monitor the implementing legislation as it reacts to the restructuring of the economy of Canada to identify those workers who are adversely affected as a result of the trade deal and to recommend appropriate initiatives by the Government as the case may be.

Second is the whole matter of the shakes and shingles initiative. We were told during the campaign—

Some Hon. Members: Order.

An Hon. Member: That is not relevant.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Kamloops has risen in debate and has been recognized but I must ask him to put some containment on his remarks, and I will watch for relevance.

Mr. Riis: I appreciate that the motion is debatable, Mr. Speaker, and that you will be watching to ensure my comments refer to the motion before us which is to fast track this whole process.

This is only my third term of office, but in 1980 the response to the Throne Speech occurred the day after the Throne Speech debate. In 1984, under a new Prime Minister, again that same practice was followed. We assumed that it would also be followed today to allow Members of Parliament to digest thoroughly—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Riis: —the comments made by the Governor General.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Riis: In closing, Mr. Speaker—

An Hon. Member: You must have missed the election.

Mr. Speaker: I am sure the Hon. Member for Kamloops is just about ready to conclude his remarks.