

*Government Orders*

Like so many other Liberal initiatives this legislation is a half-hearted attempt to placate voters rather than a fundamental change in the way government works. There is much talk about what is wrong with the system and the systemic change that is required. He is very accurate. I do not see that this legislation changes any system at all.

The Liberal government does not move quickly and decisively to resolve the problems that the electorate is angry about. It moves cautiously and slowly, inching far behind the will of the people.

• (1745)

On this side of the House we often wonder why. Why does the government drag its feet? It drags its feet because the government is elected, operated and sustained by a coterie of political friends. The way Liberal politics has always operated in this country is to weld together an extraordinary network of friends, often through the dispensation of favours.

The cabinet puts hundreds of old Liberals horses out to pasture. Three hundred and fifty government boards, councils and commissions liberally water these Liberal pack ponies until the next election comes along. Every four years a very long list of names builds up, very personal and private promises are made and if the government delivers it can be assured of continued support.

I want the House to know that the people who support the Reform Party now and in the future do so because they want good government, not because they have any chance of political patronage plums.

Even during the last election when Reform had relatively little chance of actually forming a government, they worked their hearts out. That is because Reformers believe that there is a different way to govern in Canada, that there is something called merit that overrides patronage concerns, that there is such a thing as pure political motivation where people get together and become politically motivated because they love their country rather than their salaries.

I am not saying that Liberals or even Liberal appointees do not love the country. I am saying that their love for Canada and their love of service to its people are sullied, are mixed, are mingled with the motivation of private gain in the minds of some Liberal appointees. When the collective will of the government, operated by thousands of Liberal friends in key posts, is expressed we are not surprised to find that any change from the status quo is slow and tortuous.

Over a period of many years, even in a time of financial crisis such as we are experiencing today, real change is agonisingly slow, even when the public demands it. The movement of the government is hindered by the collective will of people who are gaining handsomely from the old way of doing politics.

The old ways are passing. We are entering a new political time in Canada. Reformers foresee a government that is elected through the public demonstration of its value, its ability to act and react with speed and firmness to meet the real needs of the country, not the perceived needs of friends, of special interest groups, elite politicians and a few radical intellectuals.

The Reform Party of Canada was elected. It has support across the country because Canadians are sick of the old ways governments operate. In the last few weeks I have attended meeting after meeting in my constituency. I have talked with hundreds of constituents and they are very angry in my riding. They are fed up. They are sick to death of the old ways and the old spending, the old taxation and the old ways in which their will is reinterpreted by the government.

The Liberal government seems to have some kind of a hearing problem. When the people say no tax increases, the government hears them say readjust the tax system. That is just another way of saying there will be tax increases. When the people shout at the government that they are sick of patronage, the government hears them whisper they want to reduce patronage a little.

The government is hard of hearing. It does not understand what the people want. Canadians want a different way, a systemic change if you will, of appointing people to our boards, our commissions and our advisory bodies. The people do not want a little less of the same old thing, they want real change.

The Liberals cannot seem to hear what the people are actually saying. When the people say that they want a smaller, less intrusive government, the government repeats it in a different way. The government says "We understand. You want us to eliminate a few advisory boards that did very little in the first place. You want us to get rid of a few commissions that do not sit anyway". No, that is not what the people are saying.

The people are saying loud and clear—I hear it every day in my office—that they want to get rid of government agencies that look busy, agencies that are doing too many things right now. They want to get government out of their lives. They want to reduce the number of things that government does.

That is the difference between the Reform agenda and the Liberal agenda. In every way the Liberal government attempts to preserve the aging status quo.

• (1750)

The Liberals want window dressing. Reformers are window cleaners. The Liberals want theatre. The Reform Party of Canada wants real life. The Liberals want to throw today's hot potatoes into the laps of the next generation and let it pay for it. Reformers want to solve the difficult problems created by this generation in this generation.