

Extension of Sittings

Canadians have laced up their skates only to find themselves in a game in which the rules are clearly suspect and the American players have clearly been granted unfair advantages.

By voting for me, the majority of Canadians in Hamilton West said no to free trade.

• (2150)

For all the reasons I have stated here tonight the issue begs to be debated, debated fully and debated democratically.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Charles DeBlois (Montmorency—Orléans): Mr. Speaker, I am deeply moved to be making my first substantial speech tonight as a new Member for the constituency of Montmorency—Orléans. It might help my colleagues of the House to remind them that Montmorency—Orléans is close to the great city of Quebec. The city of Beauport forms two thirds of the riding and then there is the Côte de Beaupré. I think of all those small villages along the St. Lawrence River: Boischâtel, L'Ange-Gardien, Château Richer, Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré, Beaupré, Mont Sainte-Anne, not to forget Île d'Orléans and, of course, the two new parishes that have just been added to the riding of Montmorency—Orléans through redistribution, Saint-Féréol-des-Neiges and Saint-Tite-des-Caps, and finally, in the northern area, the municipality of Sainte-Brigitte-de-Laval.

So I want to thank most sincerely the whole population of my Montmorency—Orléans riding—which numbers about 95,000—and all my supporters who have made it possible for me to live this experience! As you know, I worked for 15 years as a journalist for the CBC and the TVA network. I spent 15 years covering the political scene at the Quebec National Assembly. I was anxious to see from the inside what politics was all about. I had often experienced what it was all about from the outside, and during the last election campaign, I had at last an opportunity to enjoy this rich experience in human contacts and discover the men and women who are our fellow citizens.

As you must have guessed, dear friends and colleagues, this emotion was counter-balanced by the warm welcome I received from all my Cabinet colleagues, including the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and all of you. I admit that the welcome I received from our great Conservative family was a great comfort to me and is helping me make the transition from journalism to politics.

I do not intend to make a long speech on free trade tonight. I will have an opportunity to deal with the

substance of this issue next week. I will deal only with the motion which is now before the House and which calls for the suspension of some provisions of our Standing Orders.

Personally, it makes me laugh. I have heard some of my colleagues opposite complain that the Government is behaving like a dictator and that the Conservatives should be ashamed of their behaviour. In my opinion, leadership was one of the main issues during the election campaign. A leader is someone who, at some point in time, stops talking and starts acting. And our Leader is a man of action.

Mr. Speaker, we have been talking of free trade for three years now. The legislation before us has already been passed by this House. We are considering it again, but people have heard enough talk. We talked for two months during the campaign. People have had enough, they want action and this is what we want to give them. This is why I have a lot of admiration for our House Leader and our whip who have been negotiating with their counterparts opposite from the beginning of the session. They tried with courtesy to agree with them on some rules of debate. But it is now time to act speedily on free trade. This afternoon, I was talking on the phone with people in my riding. I was to attend a seniors meeting this evening. I have three more meetings tomorrow evening and one more on Sunday. When I said: I cannot go, I have to stay in the House for a debate on free trade, the people in my riding were shocked. They asked me: How can you still be talking about free trade?

My constituents elected me so we could have free trade. Now they ask me how come it has not been done yet, how come we are still debating this Bill in the House. I have to tell them that it is not because we do not want to settle this issue once and for all, but because the Opposition uses all kinds of tactics to prevent us from doing so, no matter what the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis (M. Prud'homme), the Hon. Member for Yorkton—Melville (M. Nystrom) and the Hon. Member for Carleton—Gloucester (M. Bellemare) say about that. They say it surprises them that they cannot discuss free trade. We want to settle this issue as soon as possible, and we introduced the motion to suspend the rules when we could not come to an agreement with the Leaders of both opposition parties. This motion to suspend the rules is not a sign of dictatorship. It is provided for in the Standing Orders and can be used when all else fails.