

*Extension of Sittings*

In fact, I note that at this very moment one of Her Majesty's Canadian destroyers is off on a rescue mission, with the object of that mission being the rescue of the oil rig team which had to take to a safety pod when the oil rig that they were on ran into difficulty.

I ask all Hon. Members to take cognizance of the work done by the members of our Canadian Armed Forces.

The riding of Bonavista—Trinity—Conception is a large one, with a population of 90,000. I can assure the House that during the election campaign, the free trade issue was prominent, was of real concern. In fact, it is difficult for me to convey to the House in words the depth of the feeling on this issue.

Time and time again, people spoke to me of the difficulty they were having in understanding the issue. From one day to the next they would hear arguments pro and con, and both would sound convincing, with the result that it was difficult to draw any clear conclusion.

The problem for the people of Bonavista—Trinity—Conception, and for me, and for all of us here today, I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, is that it is indeed very difficult for any of us to draw any conclusion in respect of the free trade issue given that we are dealing with future impacts and effects. When one is dealing with what is to happen in the future, one can never say with certainty what will transpire. In fact, it is often the case that, in trying to guess the future, one is more often wrong than right in one's predictions.

In speaking to my constituents about the Free Trade Agreement, I explained to them that we are dealing with the future and that I did not know what the future was going to bring. In fact, in respect of the stance taken by any Member of this House, it can only be said that one cannot know what the future will bring.

**An Hon. Member:** Prosperity.

**Mr. Mifflin:** In assessing the Free Trade Agreement, we are measuring a risk against a gain.

In my riding, there are 226 communities, all of which rely on fishing for their livelihood. And fishing, as all Hon. Members will know, is a seasonal occupation. As well, there are no certainties as to the catch. The fishing season, depending upon the licence one holds and the area in which one is fishing, ends sometime in August and resumes in the spring. The result is that unemployment insurance benefits, subsidies of one sort or another, and regional development programs play a major role in

those areas of the country where fishing is the economic mainstay.

In those circumstances, it is little wonder that these people should be concerned about their future; it is little wonder that they should be concerned about the fact that subsidies are as yet undefined under the Free Trade Agreement; it is little wonder that there is a great concern that the impact on Canada's social programs is unclear, as is the impact on regional development programs.

In the course of the campaign, I had great difficulty in explaining to my constituents that, in the words of our chief negotiator, we ran out of time in trying to negotiate the definition of what is a subsidy and how regional development programs will be treated.

How does one explain how we could have run out of time for something so important to the people of Bonavista—Trinity—Conception and to the people of many other ridings in this country? How can you run out of time for something that important? Why not ask for more time? Why are we running out of time in this debate? Who said January 1? We are answering to the President of the United States. We do not want to offend him. That is why we are having this debate and closing it off. That is why I have to go back to the people of Bonavista—Trinity—Conception and say I could not debate the issue to the fullest because I did not have time. Once again, we ran out of time.

• (1820)

Why did we run out of time? Do we not control what we are doing ourselves? Is this what it is going to be like from here on in? Are we going to be second-class citizens in our own country because we are running out of time? I do not believe we should run out of time. However, it does not look as if my belief is going to hold much weight. It is a little bit like putting your hand in a pail of water and drawing it out again. The pail of water is not much different when you take your hand out than when you put it in. This is going to be very difficult to explain to the people of Bonavista—Trinity—Conception. It is also going to be difficult to explain why I just wasted that glass of water! I guess this can be allowed in my maiden speech.

**Mr. Marchi:** Another glass of water for the Hon. Member.