

Business of the House

Any decent, reasonable, respectable individual could not support—and we as a national party will not support it—the motion of the hon. member who happens to be the government House leader.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Scarborough West—ministerial responsibility; the hon. member for Surrey North—health care; the hon. member for Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville—Armenia; the hon. member for York West—trucking industry; the hon. member for Prince Edward—Hastings—Agriculture.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I want to say at the very outset that this is a very dark moment in our country's history, a very black moment in our country's history, a very scary time, when we consider that we are now about to address the most oppressive, the most Draconian labour legislation ever introduced into a western democracy.

We are going to be asked to support legislation that is clearly against working people across this country, especially working women. When we consider that it eliminates collective bargaining for federal public servants and now is extended beyond federal public servants, we have to ask who is next.

• (1650)

We shudder because this disease is creeping out from this place.

I only look to the province of New Brunswick and Frank McKenna there. This program looks good compared to what they are doing. This is at least a zero, three and three. Theirs is a zero, zero and a zero.

We remember the six and five program coming back again. It is a ploy against working people. That is why we feel it is fair to ask who is next. That is why on behalf of the party that I represent, the New Democratic Party, I am proud to say that the minute we sniffed this legislation, the minute we had an inkling of what this government was going to do in terms of this dastardly act, we did not debate it, we did not discuss it, we did not share our thoughts. We said we oppose this legislation now, now, now and we are not going to change our minds.

Talk about Stalinistic tendencies, talk about a big brother approach to dealing with your own employees. These are the men and women across Canada who for six and a half years have been asked to explain Tory policies. Can you imagine the horror that these folks have had to endure: explain and support Tory policies from Newfoundland to Vancouver Island. That is a terrible task to ask of anyone. They did their jobs and they work hard at it. We know they work hard at it because the Manufacturers' Association of Canada is saying: "Get these people back to work. We have got to get these people back to work to make our country work".

What did the government do at a time when it is asking its employees to be more productive, to work together, to co-operate with the government, to put their shoulders to the wheel, to make our economy more productive? The Prime Minister looks at the employees and says: "I don't think you're worth a plugged nickel. I don't think you're worth a single cent for an increase". I know we give increases to the Governor of the Bank of Canada. I know the head of CN gets increases. I know that we gave bonuses to our senior managers. I know that there were other increases throughout the system. For those tens of thousands of men and women who work for the government, if one thinks Brian Mulroney is a bad Prime Minister, imagine having him as a boss. Can you imagine having somebody who humiliates you publicly as an employer?

We are seeing something here today. The government is asking us to co-operate to get this Draconian legislation through quickly, to impose these shackles on our public employees as quickly as possible. We will not do that.

This is a very unique situation. On the one hand we have the government House leader standing in his place pleading with us in order to end this strike. May I suggest that the decent and honourable way to end this strike is for the Prime Minister to get in touch with the President of the Treasury Board and say: "Do the honourable thing and get back to the negotiating table and start dealing with your employees as you should be doing".

This is the largest strike of federal public employees that this country has ever seen. Never have public employees been so humiliated by a back to work piece of legislation.