

*Extension of Sittings*

commend it for that, but I seriously ask why, if it wants to be part of this legislative process at the start, it did not continue that practice.

This very day on the Order Paper is consideration again by vote, at six o'clock, on the amendments to the Immigration Act. Also on the Order Paper, to follow up this particular motion, which we hope will go quickly, is the House's reply to the Senate's amendments to Bill C-84. I suggest to you, Madam Speaker, that our agenda has been disrupted by these very deliberate tactics of the Liberal dominated Senate.

Finally, we have to deal with the position of the Opposition with respect to the free trade legislation. I respect their position. I do not agree with it, but I respect their ability to take it and to put it forward. However, I question whether that opposition should be by way of delay rather than by debate.

I can recite a series of comments by the Opposition with respect to what it is going to do with the free trade legislation. To build the case I will quote the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent) who said that his Party will try to stall passage of the Bill in the hope that public opinion or controversy within the Cabinet will force the Government to do the right thing.

The Hon. Member for Winnipeg said "The real war is just beginning". The Hon. Member for Essex—Windsor (Mr. Langdon) said:

Inevitably the government will cut off debate by invoking closure. But the Bill won't get out of the House of Commons until October, at the earliest.

The goal is not to stop the legislation cold, the goal is to force the government to pay such a high price that they eventually have got to see the logic of going for an election.

That is delay, that is not debate. Here is another quote from the same Member:

Our strategy is to try to slow down as much as possible the process of consideration of the Bill.

The strategy is not to win it by debate but to slow down the process of consideration.

There was a request for five days debate and the responsible comment of the House Leader of the New Democratic Party was: "Obviously we said no to that". The House Leader for the Liberal Party said: "We will fight the Government every step of the way".

When those comments are made we have to respond. We are prepared to debate and decide and the Opposition is prepared to delay and delay. When Canadians ask what the difference is between the Progressive Conservatives and the Liberals and New Democrats, that is the answer. We are prepared to debate and decide and the Opposition's only comment is to delay and delay.

When the House changed the rules in 1969 the Standing Orders were substantially revised by a motion before the House. That complete revamping of the rules took place by closure, closure, closure. That is what the Party which is now arguing against closure did.

I want to read some quotes from some eminent personages—and I submit that these will bear scrutiny, that I am not taking them out of context—not with respect so much to closure but with respect to the rights of the minority. Here is a comment from Prime Minister Trudeau:

Every democratic assembly recognizes that issues will arise from time to time which the minority in all conscience cannot accept, which the minority in order to be true to its values must oppose vigorously and never concede. That is right and proper. It's one of the basis on which rests our democratic institution. But in a democracy the ballot box, not the filibuster, is the ultimate and appropriate technique of assessment as to the actions of the Opposition.

Mr. MacEachen said:

One cannot run a parliament without an ultimate sanction to prevent a minority preventing the majority from getting their way.

An excerpt from a book called *Majority Rule* by Elaine Spitz says:

In all electoral systems, what counts is open competitiveness and the consequent equal opportunity to make each vote count equally. Any organization of voting procedures that provides all with an equal opportunity to be heard in some significant way at some point in the process satisfies democratic principles.

Those are quotes from learned authorities. I looked for editorial comment and found the following from the *Victoria Times-Colonist* in the issue of May 26, 1988. It refers to the stalling tactics of the Opposition and says:

It's not good enough for the Opposition parties to justify such tactics on the grounds that the Mulroney government is selling off our sovereignty. No Canadian is naive enough to think that there won't be a downside to a free trade pact, but many believe the potential benefits far outweigh the disadvantages. The Grits and the NDP have yet to counter that argument convincingly, to say specifically what they would offer in place of free trade. Surely that is their opportunity and their constructive role in the weeks ahead.

If they just continue to play games they can expect scant public sympathy when the government finally invokes closure—in order to meet the Jan. 1, 1989 deadline for passing enabling legislation.

I submit that the Opposition has, quite rightfully, brought to the attention of the public its opposition to the free trade legislation. However, we do not believe that by extending the sittings, thereby extending the opportunity to debate that, we are in any way infringing on the responsibilities of the Opposition. We are giving them that opportunity.

That is the situation in which we find ourselves. We are an ambitious Government with a plan which has been well organized and is well under way. We are coping with unscheduled events and a planned and deliberate obstruction by a bragging Opposition and an appointed and anointed Liberal Senate.

The solution was two-fold. Number one, we put the motion on the Order Paper which allows us to complete our agenda. Number two, we wrote to the opposition Parties to see what could reasonably be completed before the House rose. I make no apologies, Madam Speaker. We included a very long list in writing the Opposition. I call it a "kitchen sink letter" and it was a kitchen sink letter. Everything but the kitchen sink was in the letter.