

Extension of Sittings

The people of Comox—Alberni sent me to this House because they wanted me to talk about an issue that is extremely important to them. That issue is regional fairness. They saw what happened under a Tory Government over the last four years. They saw that procurements by the federal Government in British Columbia over a four-year period dropped from 6.5 per cent of total procurements to 4.1 per cent, in a province where the population is 12 per cent of the total population of the country. That is absolutely unfair to western Canada. That is why we have 10 Members from Saskatchewan and 19 from British Columbia.

People have given us a mandate to discuss the issue of regional equity because the Conservatives have been sucking the West to pay off the provinces of central Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Our constituents want us to talk to the Government about child care as well. If the last Parliament had been extended by one week then we might have had a child care program. It would not have been all that satisfactory, but at least it would have been something. Why did the Government not reintroduce it in the first days of this Parliament? By doing so the Government could have shown how important it considers that issue. After all, who are to be served in terms of the child care legislation? Single parent families are being served—women. It is they who on the basis of equity want to get out and use their talents in the workforce while being assured that their children are being well taken care of. Why did the Government not put that on the floor as a priority? Why instead is the Government recognizing its obligations to Ronald Reagan before recognizing its obligations to men, women, children and families in our country?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Dick: How about talking to the motion?

Mr. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): I will be getting to the motion in my next few words. Why does the Hon. Member not get in motion and make a speech on this issue?

Mr. Dick: I might.

Mr. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): My constituents sent me here to talk about matters of importance to them, matters such as the environment. They would like to see a government that expresses at least a minimal amount of priority for the environment, a government that is committed to clearing up the mess it has made so far but which is also willing to prevent further damage to our environment so we can set aside something for our children, our grandchildren and future generations. There is an organization in British Columbia called the Telkwa Foundation which says that we do not inherit the environment from our forefathers, we borrow it from our children. We should be treating the environment as if it were borrowed goods that we have to keep intact, maintain, restore and turn over to the benefit of our children when we are finished with it. We are doing an unbelievable job of stewardship as far as the environment is concerned.

More than any other issue that developed during the last election campaign, more than any other issue brought to me by constituents, whether expressed in letters to the editor, letters directed to me or questions on the floor at all candidates meetings, was the issue of trade with the United States. The people of my constituency absolutely reject the idea of economic integration with the United States. They see that such a free trade arrangement so called is nothing more than a foot in the door to economic integration and, ultimately, to political integration with the United States. That is what they are concerned about. That is why we saw such an overwhelming support for the New Democratic Party in British Columbia, the Party that opposed vigorously the free trade arrangement because we did not want to see the sovereignty of our country compromised. We do not want to see the independence of our country compromised. We do not want to see through every economic door the political independence of our country compromised by a Government that wants to turn us over lock, stock and barrel to Ronald Reagan before January 1.

Mr. Dick: Do you know anything about procedure?

Mr. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): The Hon. Member can get up and speak about procedure until the cows come home.