

Government Orders

would not have had the knowledge or learned the facts and figures I needed to know to make representation in committee and in this House against the cancellation of this subsidy. I definitely want to say thanks to him.

This bill went to a legislative committee. With my colleague from Lambton—Middlesex, and the support of witnesses in the grain industry and the transportation industry and the support of the mayors of Saint John, New Brunswick, Halifax and Dartmouth, we stopped this bill cold in the legislative committee. It stopped there. It did not come back for third reading. There was lots of time. This bill was stopped cold in the legislative committee months before last month's prorogation and the government did not attempt to bring it back.

What does the government do? It reintroduces the bill under this pernicious, and I use the word again, pernicious motion. Is it not interesting? Is it not ironic that on the same day, the very same day that the Minister of Transport says: "We will do everything in our power to assist the Atlantic Canadian ports, and in particular the Port of Halifax," that Bill C-26 raises its ugly head, the ghost of Christmas past. Bill C-26 is back here being rammed through with closure by this government.

If this is everything that is in the power of the Government of Canada to help the Port of Halifax, it is no wonder that the government party is at 8 per cent in the polls in Atlantic Canada, 8 per cent. I have been hearing for days and days that the Conservatives are at 14 per cent. Well, not in the Atlantic and Bill C-26 is part and parcel of the reason.

Atlantic Canadians are committed to this country. They are committed to federalism. A poll last week told us that Atlantic Canadians have the strongest belief in the country in bilingualism. Atlantic Canadians, the most tolerant people in this country, are absolutely right.

Atlantic Canadians have taken just about every brickbat and every bomb that the government can throw at them. However, there comes a point. The point has come with this bill not only being reintroduced when the government did not have the face to bring it in for third reading after its disgraceful behaviour in the legislative committee, but being rammed through, forced through on the same day that we hear these wonderful promises

from the Minister of Transport. This is unacceptable. It is unacceptable to Atlantic Canadians.

All of us stand here in front of you—there are three members here from the Atlantic in the House now, my colleagues from Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba—and say: "This must stop". We have heard the eloquence of the member for Kingston and the Islands on the unprecedented behaviour of this Parliament, unprecedented in Canadian or British parliamentary history.

We have heard the eloquence of the member for LaSalle—Émard on the question of the environmental bill that is supported by virtually no one in the environmental sector in this country.

We will hear more, and we will hear it soon, but I say that if this government does not want to see people marching in the streets, this government had better look to its own advice. We are supposed to be in a less partisan House of Commons. The people of Canada know when the wool is being pulled over their eyes and they will not accept it.

The people of Canada understand when this government is trying to hide behind empty phrases and foolish words and at the same time is continuing to attack certain regions and certain sectors of this country. Mr. Speaker, 8 per cent; just wait. Very soon this government will deservedly be in a minus position.

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, after the fine speech given by the member from Hamilton just a minute ago, it is hard to know where to continue on in this type of debate.

I guess what it brings to mind, and the reason for joining in, is that as the rules of the House of Commons were changed since the last session, it takes a while for the impact of these rules to begin to sink in for individual members, particularly those of us who are new to the House of Commons.

What has struck me, as I have watched the House reorganize itself, is just how democratic the motive behind these changes has been. I do not say that loosely and I do not say that without some sadness. I think it is important that the members of Parliament maintain their confidence in this institution and show Canadians how it can work.