

While I am on my feet, I wish to advise Hon. Members that immediately after Question Period, the Government intends to call the free trade legislation, Bill C-2.

Mr. Gauthier: There we have an example of a Notice of Motion that is in order. They are learning. I would hope that—

Mr. Lewis: We now have it on highest authority.

Mr. Gauthier: No, no, I just want to give Hon. Members an example of what happened prior to this debate starting, going back to Tuesday evening. We were told in the House by the same Minister who just sat down that a letter had been sent to our House Leader proposing certain ways and means of disposing with legislation.

• (1240)

I stood up and said that I did not recall seeing that letter and I did not recall my House Leader receiving a letter. I asked what the Minister was talking about and said that I would like to reserve our comments. I walked out of here and, believe it or not, we were having House negotiations by means the press—we were having as we say in French—

[*Translation*]

—“negotiation through the belly”.

At that point the Government could not pretend they had sent a letter. Hardly a few minutes after coming into this House, the Minister sent a letter to this Party advising us of a proposal. He then rose in this House to suggest the letter was out. That letter had not been received, although the media, outside this place, had got the letter, Mr. Speaker. They had the letter, they had the proposal. The Minister thought he might get away with this. I went to see him and told him: Listen, this makes no sense. Where is the letter?

I then got a copy. On December 12, 1988, at 6:25 p.m., Mr. Speaker, nearly some 15 to 20 minutes after he announced it in this House.

[*English*]

The letter in question that we got later in the evening had already been given to the media. The Member wonders why we are kind of upset sometimes with his methods of negotiation. If you want to tell me something, Mr. Speaker, I know you will tell me directly right here and that you will do it properly. You will not tell the CBC, CTV or some other media that you have

sent me a letter which I have not received. You would have the decency to make sure that those to whom the letter is addressed have received it. But not the Government.

The Government wonders why we are upset. That is a heck of a way to start a session having media intermediaries tell us what is going on. We do not like it. The Government should not be doing it. It is a bad way to negotiate. The letter with that notice was not done properly and the Government has indisposed many of us by doing that.

Let us finish with this motion, Mr. Speaker.

[*Translation*]

This motion, well now we feel it is wrong, incomplete, utterly ill-drafted, we cannot support it because it is not at this point easy to understand. It is not correct at this point either, Mr. Speaker, because it refers to all kinds of things that do not hold together and that will not be able to hold together, because hopefully we will not proceed the way the Government intends to. I will leave it at this, since the Government gave notice and other Members may have something to say about it. I will therefore yield to speakers from the New Democratic Party. But I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of this side of the House, that Liberal Members will oppose the proposal.

[*English*]

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, if you listen carefully you can hear the muffled sound of jackboots in this place this morning.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Riis: It is the kind of sound you attach to a dictatorial government. It is the kind of sound that you expect from totalitarian regimes which do not like Parliaments, votes or listening to people with opposing views. I am very sad today as I look across the aisle in the House of Commons of Canada.

Before I begin my remarks, which are not going to be pleasant remarks regarding this Government, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that if the Government wanted to debate free trade legislation today, why did it not have the debate begin at 11 o'clock this morning? We were here. We were gathered and we were prepared to debate. The Leaders of the opposition Parties were prepared to debate. But, no, the Government pulled a little procedural trick to force votes.