

If anyone needed further evidence of the intellectual depth the NDP has reached, here it is. As I said, Mr. Speaker, I am curious to see how the members from the Liberal Party will vote on this motion. That should be something to see.

Maybe we will see them do a "flip flop", like some candidates to the direction of the party are doing regarding their position on the Meech Lake Accord. One day, they are against the agreement as it stands, but toward the end of the race, they start mellowing. Flip one way, flop the other way. That is interesting.

The member opposite suggests, let us not forget it, that the Senate has the power and the right to defeat any bill as it pleases. That is what it says. Members of this House will not be surprised to hear such a statement from a member of the New Democratic Party, because many of them doubt that party is committed to the principles it claims to defend.

What a shock it must be for other members of this House who believed the NDP was committed to democratic principles.

The opposition's statement is also preposterous, Mr. Speaker, because it applies to any bill even those our country needs the most. Legislation that could help the unemployed, Canadian workers, people on welfare, older workers and those who would like to get better training, as I say, any bill!

A vote for the motion of the New Democratic Party would be the equivalent of transferring our powers as elected representatives to the Upper House, to people who have not been duly elected by the people. To vote for such a motion would even mean renouncing our responsibilities and it would be a nonsense.

• (1730)

Bill C-21 is such a measure and its basic principle, training UI recipients with UI funds, has the support—Listen to this, opposition members. According to a Decima poll published on May 14, Bill C-21 was supported by two thirds of Canadians. Therefore, the hon. member does not seem to care about the needs or desires of the people with respect to this bill, if we go by his motion.

According to this motion, centuries of parliamentary tradition count for nothing. But the case that concerns us

### *Supply*

today involves more than disrespect for parliamentary tradition; it shows disrespect for Canadians who expect all elected members of this House to do their job, which is to govern the country.

That is exactly what the government is trying to do with our bill and the Labour Force Development Strategy is a key element. Mr. Speaker, we are convinced that Canadians agree with us on these matters. If they do not, they can withdraw their support from us, unlike the senators, at the next election. That is how parliamentary democracy should operate. Only the elected members of this House and not the senators are answerable to the Canadian people. Suggesting that it might be otherwise, as the motion under consideration does, is unacceptable for all who firmly believe in the integrity of our political system and our democracy.

Mr. Speaker, I know that my time has already expired, but I think that it is important today to tell this House that the motion before us is unacceptable and that it should never even have been introduced. I think it is irresponsible to Canadians.

[*English*]

**Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member opposite is a valued member of the House of Commons. He has ample experience in the business of the House and, to some degree I suppose, in the business of the other place. He has, I think, properly described the substance of the motion put forward by the New Democratic Party as being ill-founded and in many ways misconstruing the role and function of the Senate in Parliament.

In criticizing the New Democratic Party and others in such a way as to perhaps make the other place the whipping boy of Canadian parliamentary democracy, the member has failed to touch upon constructive initiative for reform of the Senate, which I think almost everyone in this House agrees should be initiated.

I know the hon. member will say that Senate reform is a viable, legitimate item on any reform agenda in this House and in the other place, but that perhaps some of us would prefer to postpone it until after June 23.

I suggest that the reform of the Senate is a very important issue. It is certainly a big enough issue to consume us here this afternoon.