

*Extension of Sittings*

You will recall what happened on the night of the election, Mr. Speaker. We had members of the Opposition, representatives of both Parties, telling the Canadian people that they accepted the decision of the Canadian electorate. Something happened between then and now that has made them all excited. It has made them say: "We have to debate this deal. What is the rush? Let's take our time. Let's drag this out". It all has to do with Bob White.

Bob White, as we have since discovered, likes to write letters. Not only does he like to write letters, he likes to put them in the mail. We have discovered that not only does he put them in the mail to the people to whom he addresses them, the person whose name is at the beginning of that letter, but he sends them to the public through the newspapers and the media. We know what happened then.

All of a sudden this secret communication, this important discussion between the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent) and Mr. White, was all over the front pages of the newspapers. What was Mr. White saying? He was saying that the NDP had rolled over and played dead in the election and that the Liberals had been able to co-opt them. As a result, the Liberals have more seats than the New Democratic Party, and that will never do.

Here we have this public criticism out there where everyone can see it and suddenly the lights go on. Those Members could not come into the House and stick to what they had said the night of the election, that the Canadian people had decided.

Suddenly after this letter there was a change of heart. Suddenly we found that members of the New Democratic Party had to stand up to their full height—and it is an expression I am well familiar with, Mr. Speaker—and fight. They had to prove that Bob White was wrong, even though Mr. White was part of their campaign team and even though he sat in on all of their meetings. The New Democratic Party did not like Bob White criticizing its Leader and its Party. Now we know what has happened with the New Democratic Party.

What about our colleagues, the Liberals? What is the situation with the Liberals? Those of us who have been here for a while know that during the election they fight one another. When the election is over the Liberals and the New Democratic Party still fight each other. Would it not look terrible to see the NDP fighting tooth and nail for its constituents and its voters and the Liberals sitting on their hands? Of course it would. They could

not let that happen. That could not possibly be allowed to take place. In fact we have a catch-22 situation. The NDP is going to make sure it proves Bob White wrong, and the Liberals are going to make sure the NDP does not steal the limelight as the Liberals were successful in stealing it from that Party during the election.

Fortunately, the Canadian public was watching very closely and it chose our Party because of our vision for this country. It let the other two Parties fight it out between them as to who would be the Official Opposition. That is what it is really all about.

It is about a battle that is going on within their caucus and within their Parties and it has spilled out on to the floor of the House of Commons. As a result there is the possibility that a grinch may in fact steal Christmas.

None of us want that to happen. We really want to proceed with this legislation, but we want to ensure that all the people in this House who wish to speak on the issue of free trade will have that opportunity. That brings me right back to where I began, with this motion which the Government very wisely and very generously tabled here in the House of Commons. We want all of these people to have a chance to speak. We do not like to see fights and anger within the NDP caucus. We do not like to see tension between Bob White and the Hon. Leader of the NDP. That worries us. We do not want to see that happen. We want to ensure those Members have a chance to come into this House and express their concerns on the issue of free trade.

There has been an election since the last time we dealt with this legislation. The reason we have to go through it again is that it did not receive Royal Assent. That is why we have to go through the procedure at this point to make this legislation a reality.

The Canadian people chose this Party to form the government. They chose us because of our vision for the country. They chose us because they saw us creating jobs and opportunity for the Canadian people. They saw us as the Party offering a positive direction for this country. That is why we were chosen.

In fact, we are in a majority position today, which is a very unusual circumstance. As Canadians know, it is not common to have back-to-back majorities elected in this country. When the Canadian people do that, when they elect back-to-back majorities, it is because of the confidence they see in that Party. That was demonstrated very clearly by the very fact that this Party has now formed the government for a second time.