

Extension of Sittings

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornson: It is a great honour to represent the riding of Selkirk and the class of September, I believe it was, at the particular college I went to.

As I stand here this evening I am very uncomfortable in the fact that I am a purist as far as rules and order are concerned. I can see where the Chair is uncomfortable with the way the situation is going, and I am sympathetic.

I think it is important to speak to the House this evening about the fact that we are debating procedure and tradition somewhat. I would like to remind Members opposite that they basically broke with tradition and used their strength in other sections of the Government to slow down the passage of the trade agreement. It was that influence which caused the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) to take us out on the campaign trail.

• (2310)

The result is that the people decided what they wanted, and we are here this evening. It is also important to speak to the people at the far end of the House, and I believe the term is the rump of the House. I had the opportunity to run against the flagship of the NDP Party and the Free Trade Agreement. We worked very hard in the riding of Selkirk. The people of the Selkirk riding decided that they wanted free trade. That was widely shown by the fact that their flagship, Howard Pawley, is not sitting in the House this evening.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornson: To a greater extent, there is the fact that the flagship for the Liberal Party did not receive as many votes as the NDP candidate. It is important that I say to the House that the people in the Selkirk riding do want the Free Trade Agreement. The people in the Selkirk riding want us to get on with the business of the House and discuss the trade agreement. When the vote is taken in the near future, we are going to get on with the business of getting the trade agreement through. The trade agreement is very important to the people in the riding of Selkirk. Along the campaign trail many people came to my aid for many reasons, but most of them understood the fact that we need the trade agreement for the riding of Selkirk.

The biggest single employer in the riding of Selkirk is the steel industry. It knows what can happen to it, and the people of Selkirk know what can happen to it if we do not have access to that American market.

In the northeast corner of my riding there is a fishing community. Freshwater Fish is a major exporter of fish

into the U.S. market. It is the biggest market for the Freshwater Fish Corporation, and it is important to the people of the Selkirk riding.

In the bottom right-hand corner of my riding there is a large Hutterite community which works very hard in various sectors of the agricultural industry, pork being a major one. Seventy per cent of the pork in Manitoba and in the Selkirk riding is exported to the United States. We no longer need those artificial barriers because we are more efficient at raising hogs than the people on the other side of the border.

During my first few days in Ottawa in preparation to come into the House, I had the opportunity to phone home and find out that there is an industry that wants to come from the United States to expand in Canada. Dow Corning wants to come to the community of Selkirk to expand. These are jobs that will be coming our way. Members opposite are not speaking about those jobs. In our community we have the opportunity to do well and progress. The trade agreement will give us the availability to do that.

An Hon. Member: At what cost?

Mr. Bjornson: I do not want to hear negative comments from the other side of the House. If we have the opportunity to go out and work hard, let us go and do it.

I am very fortunate to have three healthy children. They are very good children. When they are finished their education, I want them to have opportunities, as I did when I finished my education. We want all our children to be able to get out and earn a living. It makes one feel much prouder to have a pay cheque rather than a UIC cheque.

I urge the House to consider the amendments in order that we can quickly get to the business of discussing the trade agreement in a good and honourable fashion. I know after Hon. Members opposite hear the arguments on this side of the House that they will agree with us and will pass the agreement.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Madam Speaker, I wish to congratulate you and your colleagues in the chair on your re-elections to key positions in the House of Commons.

I also want to thank the constituents of the riding of Thunder Bay—Atikokan who saw fit to return me to the House of Commons as their representative. All of us fight elections. Some of us win and some of us do not. It was my first re-election, and I am pleased to have passed that threshold and have returned.