

Extension of Sittings

● (2220)

Many of those criticisms that were debated before will continue to be debated in the future. On the question of subsidies, we now have a committee which will sit for seven years and hopefully resolve some of the more obvious problems. Of course, various countries will always be debating the question of subsidies, one versus another.

Then we have other issues that were mentioned, things such as water. That was a completely phoney issue, in my view, when one looks at the legislation and the amendments and so on. Then there was the pension question. Pathetic, absolutely pathetic. It was alleged that social programs were going to be damaged and reduced and so on. That issue came down to a question of the indirect impact of the Free Trade Agreement.

The basic supposition was that the Tories would give away the ship. Pressures to reduce government programs are there in any country, and of course these are the things that Canadians value. I think any government that reduces social programs in Canada would definitely disappear in very short order. There is nothing in the Free Trade Agreement that would cause that to happen, and fortunately the people of Don Valley North were able to see through that in sufficient numbers.

I think I would have had a much larger majority had the election gone on for another few weeks. The more I got around, the more I explained things to people, and they were anxious to learn, the more votes I won. I think on this particular issue they were very intelligent and very wonderful people to be able to see through so much garbage.

I very firmly believe that the people of Canada and the people of Don Valley North do not want this Parliament to spend another six months debating this issue. That is why I support the motion before us. This Government has a mandate to commence free trade. It does not have a mandate through a majority of Canadians, but of course no government ever has. This Government was elected on a lot more than free trade. It was elected on competency. It was elected on a regional representation basis. It has a clear mandate to proceed with the legislation it espouses. I think the people of Canada would want us to be home with our families for Christmas, and we may well be here Christmas Eve, but I certainly think we should be home for Christmas and free trade should be through Parliament. We should get on and deal with the many other issues that people are

concerned about, issues such as housing, and the environment, pressing issues which are of concern to the people of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Hon. Member for Comox—Alberni.

Mr. McDermid: All these provincial NDP Leaders retire to the House of Commons.

Mr. Bob Skelly (Comox—Alberni): It is said there is another House that provincial hacks retire to but we cannot mention that one here.

I am glad to have this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to take part in this debate and discuss some of the issues brought out during the long debate today and this evening. I would just like to deal briefly with some of the suggestions made by some of the Members on the other side of the House. I would like to talk a little bit about scare tactics because I understand the Tories felt a little threatened during the campaign and felt their constituents might have been a little threatened by the scare tactics that were used.

We on the other side of the country noticed that some of the scare tactics were being generated by the pro free trade party. I can recall the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) speaking to the people of Canada and suggesting that if they did not accept the free trade arrangement we were debating, the U.S. would not agree with the acid rain proposals of the national Government and we would be subjected to more and more acid rain from the U.S. The threat was there from the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) that if we did not accept this Free Trade Agreement, regardless of what we thought it contained that might be damaging to the people of Canada, we would be pelted with acid rain from the U.S. That was the threat delivered to the people of Canada by the Prime Minister himself during the election campaign.

Another statement he made was that if we did not pass this free trade legislation or accept the free trade proposal with the U.S., the U.S. would retaliate against all Canadian trade and all Canadian products. The U.S. would descend into a completely protectionist regime.

Mr. McDermid: Who said that?

Mr. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): The Prime Minister of Canada said that.