

Motions

through a deal which, by all counts, is not only a bad deal for those who are opposed to free trade, but also from the perspective of those who support the general concept of free trade.

What is the Government afraid of? What does it have to hide? Why is it afraid to go to the people? Is it because the Government believes that the people will see this bad Mulroney deal for what it really is, a sham, a sell-out, a step toward continental absorption and assimilation?

● (1620)

We want to fight it but we need the ear of the people to do so. That is why we cannot have a committee that simply goes to the capital cities of each province for one day. In Ontario, the border does not stop at Steeles Avenue. The people of Hamilton have a right to have a say, as do the people of Timmins and Atikokan, as well as the people of Red Deer, Alberta. The people of the Northwest Territories have a right to a say, as do the people of the Yukon.

This motion is outrageous and, as far as I am concerned, is an example of a democracy that has run amuck, a government that is out of control and is only interested in ramming through a motion which could spell the very end of our country.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the New Democratic Party to deal with the motion before us.

We have raised our concerns a number of times, both in the House and in the committee, about the extent as well as the area to be covered in the public hearings to be held by the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade.

There will be two weeks of hectic travel in which the committee will go to every capital city and a community in the Northwest Territories. Travelling to 11 cities in 11 days is an impossible task in itself. I know the difficulties that lie ahead for that committee having been on the Transport Committee that spent a week, if not longer, to tour the western Arctic alone on the question of deregulation of the transportation industry.

We have a number of regrets in the way the Government has handled the free trade deal. We are disturbed by the Government's demand to have hearings prior to receiving the details of the agreement. We are opposed to a committee of this House being given a very few days in which to travel and in which to review the final details, should it receive them, before it is due to report to the House. We most sincerely regret that the Yukon, which includes some 800 miles of Canada-U.S. border, will not even have one day of quasi hearings. Once again, the Yukon is left out of a process that so fundamentally affects this country, just as it was left out, along with the Northwest Territories, in the Meech Lake Accord process.

I regret that the Government has chosen to take this smoke and mirrors approach to consulting the people of Canada. The committee will not visit the northern parts of Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia or Quebec. The capital cities do not represent the people of Canada.

We are not prejudging what the people of Canada will tell the committee, but the people of the northern parts of provinces should at least have an opportunity to express their views on the agreement, as they should. While we regret the timetable and travel schedule of the committee, we would regret even more not even having this small opportunity to hear from Canadians.

Clearly, the Government, with its majority on the committee, had the opportunity to include the Yukon in its timetable. We must respect the resolution of the committee even though we may not like it, but it would have been even more unwise for the committee to hold hearings only in Ottawa, preventing the regions of Canada and all Canadians, including fishermen, farmers, small business people, natives, and women from having a say on this fundamental question for the future of Canada.

The committee must be given permission to travel so that people throughout the country may be able to give the Government the message that they must be heard and it should call an election in this country so people can have their say.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, not only is the substance of this deal for economic union between Canada and the United States very troublesome, the process by which it was drafted and by which the Government wants to ratify it is very disturbing.

We must also place some importance on the process behind this deal because it was the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) who told us about open government, accessible government and participatory democracy. We have seen that those are very much empty words when it comes to the actual implementation and spirit of what is meant by them. It is empty rhetoric.

We cannot afford to ignore the process behind the free trade deal that was just signed by the President of the United States and our Prime Minister. This so-called agreement has the potential of changing the very nature and identity of this country, and what we mean by the term "Canadianism".

The Prime Minister's statement in 1983 becomes all the more relevant in this debate. When he was seeking the leadership of his Party at that time, he said no to free trade. During the election of 1984 not one word was spoken on the arrangement of a free trade deal with the United States. One would think that those statements would logically call for a debate on the process. Yet the Prime Minister is denying that process. He does not have the courage to call an election on this issue, but would wait until the deal is finalized and