

*Extension of Sittings*

The Government of Canada in 1988 in the Thirty-fourth Parliament is doing just that. It is drawing into consequence and example a restriction of the rights in committee of this House. That is not to be tolerated. It is certainly not to be approved by a House that has any respect for its rights and privileges.

I think perhaps I have argued myself out of my difficulties in this regard. Yes, the motion is worthy of contempt and rejection, and with all due respect to the Hon. Members from Simcoe North and Calgary West, any attempt to tinker with it, to render it somewhat the less appalling is insufficient. Only its rejection will do. Therefore, I can in conscience resume my seat arguing now against both the motion and its inadequate amendment.

**Mr. Jack Shields (Athabasca):** Madam Speaker, first I would like to congratulate you and your colleagues in the chair upon being re-appointed. I would like to congratulate all of my colleagues and friends who have been elected to this House. I welcome this opportunity to bring forward some of my thoughts on the present motion that is before us.

I think one must remember that immediately following the election, leaders of both Opposition Parties said that the people had spoken. An election, a very hard-fought election, took place on free trade. Both leaders clearly stated for all Canadians to see that they would co-operate and that their Parties would co-operate to bring speedy passage to this legislation. Basically they said that because we had formed a majority Government and had a mandate to proceed with the legislation now before us.

• (2040)

I would like to remind Hon. Members and perhaps inform some of the new Members in the Chamber that in the last session before the election this legislation was debated for more than 350 hours at all stages. It was contemplated at all stages for more than 60 days.

**Mr. Skelly (Comox—Alberni):** A different Parliament.

**Mr. Shields:** I hear an Hon. Member say that that a different Parliament. I wish to remind Hon. Members that it passed the House after vigorous debate at all stages.

**Mr. Skelly (Comox—Alberni):** Closure at all stages.

**Mr. Kempling:** You were not here, you would not know.

**Mr. Skelly (Comox—Alberni):** I was watching you on TV.

**Mr. Shields:** We sent the Bill to committee, we heard witnesses, and the Bill then went to the other place for Royal Assent. The Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition (Mr. Turner) directed the Liberal Leader of the other place to stop and let the people decide. That was the cry that originated with the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) and his Party and was picked up by the socialist Party. I submit that the people did decide. This Government is the first back-to-back majority Government since 1953, and the first back-to-back Conservative Government in more than 90 years. The question then becomes: Do we in the House have a mandate? Absolutely, we have a mandate to proceed with this legislation.

After the election the Leaders of the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party were interviewed by the media. They said that our job and commitment was to go back to the House of Commons and co-operate in speedy passage of this legislation.

I wonder what happened between the time of those interviews and now. I would like to suggest that the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition is having leadership problems. He is being stabbed in the back by his Party, and he is going to be turfed out. All of this is speculation. To keep the focus of the Canadian people off what is going on within the Party, they have taken up the charge today because new Members are demanding it. Therefore, we have heard many comments about delaying this legislation and keeping it here.

Why have members of the New Democratic Party returned and changed their tune when their Leader made a commitment to the Canadian people and to all Members of the House that he would provide co-operation and speedy passage? Well, he received a letter from Bob White who said: "I do not like the way you ran the campaign. You let the Liberals get ahead of us and take the debate to the people when we should have, and we should have had more Members." The House Leader of the NDP has stated: "If they think they are going to get this legislation through the House, they can forget about it. We are not going to accommodate them so that they can have early Christmas holidays".

We heard the tone, we knew exactly what was happening, and we saw what happened when we returned to the House of Commons and attempted to seek agreement from both Parties to proceed in an orderly, co-operative manner to get the legislation passed through the House and into the Senate.