

Time Allocation

The two opposition Parties have some 70 Members, and we recognize that we are a minority. We recognize that we cannot carry the day, but simply because we will fail to carry the day in the House it surely should not mean that a minority has to stop advocating its point of view. Surely we recognize the rights of minorities in this country, whether they are Liberals or New Democrats, to have a voice, and to be heard, and to speak for what I think is a majority of Canadians. I believe in the House that we speak for the majority of Canadians on the trade agreement.

Whether we are a minority or a majority our voice is being snuffed out, the rights of Canadians are being denied, and Parliament is being trampled on by a Government that is so suffused with the appetite for power that it has forgotten its obligations and rights to recognize the most fundamental principle that we must honour in the House is the rights of democracy and freedom of expression, and those are what the Government is turning the lights out on in this House of Parliament.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, once again this is a very dark day for Canada's Parliament. This is a closure-crazed Government. Time and again over the last four years the Government has brought in the heavy jackboot of closure. It brought it in on the drug Bill. The people of Canada were speaking out against the initiative of the Government regarding prescription drugs and we see the results in rising prices. The Government brought in closure on the Air Canada Bill, the refugee Bill, the immigration Bill, and the Official Languages Act.

The Government has assumed because it has 208 Members that it can do anything it wants. We saw it with the Standing Orders which govern the behaviour in the House in terms of regulation. Government Members tossed them out the window and said: "We don't have to follow any Standing Orders. We can make up our own. We have the majority. We have the jackboots on in this democratic system". This is a closure crazed Government.

It brings in its parliamentary assassins. For example, the Minister for International Trade (Mr. Crosbie) is one of the major assassins, then there is the Government House Leader (Mr. Mazankowski), the Deputy Government House Leader (Mr. Lewis), and the Parliamentary Secretary, and the other Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Trade (Mr. McDermid). They are parliamentary assassins because they are making a mockery not only of Parliament, but they are democratic assassins. They have said to the people of Canada: "We are going to thumb your nose, Canadians". The fact is that seven out of ten Canadians, 70 per cent of the people of Canada, have said time and again that they want an election on this trade deal before the Government jams it, rams it, forces it, and rushes it through the House of Commons.

What does the Minister for International Trade say to them? "Poof, we don't care about 70 per cent of Canadians. We know better. We have the majority. We have the muscle in

the House of Commons and we can do anything we want. We are going to jam this legislation called the free trade deal down your throats, Canadians".

The people of Canada are just waiting to get back at the Government. The people of Canada are just waiting for the election to be called. Everybody in the country is saying: "Call an election, Prime Minister. If you have the courage of what you say in the House of Commons regarding the trade deal, if you believe what you say, then let us debate it for the two months of a general election, and let the people decide whether or not they want to proceed".

But, no, this Government does not believe in democracy. After all, why should we be surprised? This is the Party that shut down the House of Commons for 16 days. Its members rushed around and said: "We are not going to come into the House of Commons, we are going to close it down. We don't want any more debate". That is the Party that abused Parliament.

Once again we are seeing what happens when it decides to hold hearings across Canada before anybody sees the trade deal. Can anyone imagine anything so silly, so peculiar, and so dumb as the Minister for International Trade stating that hearings would be held across Canada for one day in every major city before anybody sees the trade deal?

● (1620)

That is exactly what they did. They said: "Well, we have had hearings across the country". Well, they have used closure at every single stage of this Bill. Then the Deputy Government House Leader (Mr. Lewis) came to the House Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Gray) and to the House Leader of the New Democrats (Mr. Riis), and said: "Listen, could we cut a deal? Can we agree to wrap up the debate in a few days?" What does it take for these people to understand what we are saying? We are trying to say that we are not going to facilitate the passage of this legislation.

An Hon. Member: Tear it up.

Mr. Riis: This is bad legislation for Canada. This is unCanadian. This is undemocratic, the way that they are approaching this. We will not have anything to do with it. Do not ask us to cut a deal behind the scenes.

How do we get through to these thick-headed monsters called Tories across the way? We wrote a letter and said: "Well, listen, we want to spend the next two years debating this trade deal". Maybe they will then get the impression, the picture, that we do not want to co-operate to facilitate a deal that we think is not in the best interests of Canada. Finally, they caught on. They realized that we were not prepared to facilitate the debate. They caught on that we were not prepared to make a deal to jam this through before the people of Canada have had an opportunity to indicate their position on the trade deal.