

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): I was prepared to suspend judgment and look at the merits of this deal. When I encountered supporters of the deal, as I occasionally did, although more at the beginning than at the end of the campaign, I asked them: "What does this deal do for you?" Invariably I would get the answer: "The deal could always be better, but we might as well go ahead with it."

When asked the question "how will this deal benefit you", the answers were hard to come by. The more I learned about the deal, the more disturbed I became and the more concerned I was about the consequences that it would have for Canada and for our future.

[*Translation*]

No matter, Madam Speaker, on November 21, Canadians gave their support to the Conservative Party and gave it a mandate to proceed with this agreement with the United States. As agreed before the election and during the campaign, we said we would not prevent this agreement to go through.

So we will have our agreement with the United States.

[*English*]

This Government has been given a mandate to proceed with this Free Trade Agreement. We concede that, but it did not receive a mandate to ram this deal through the House. It did not receive a mandate to limit debate, to ride roughshod over the concerns of 57 per cent of Canadians as expressed by their representatives on this side of this House.

I would like to know from the Government what the rush is. I would like to know what the indecent haste is to pass this legislation and to lock ourselves into this agreement. Whose agenda are we following here?

Mr. McDermid: The Government's.

Mr. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): What new initiatives does this Government have on its agenda that require that we pass this legislation within two weeks?

Mr. McDermid: Because it is our agenda.

Mr. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): If there is an agenda, it was not revealed in the Speech from the Throne. Maybe the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) is trying to accommodate his friend, the U.S. President. Maybe he wants to give Ronnie one more

Extension of Sittings

notch in his belt, one more conquest, our Canadian resources, to finish off his presidency before he rides off into the California sunset on January 21, to retire gracefully on his ranch with a secure supply of Canadian gas to keep his and Nancy's hearth warm and cosy.

The Canadian people gave the Government a mandate to proceed with its free trade deal. Canadians also expressed grave concerns about our social programs, our regional development programs, our resources, and our future. These concerns are expressed in the election of all Members on this side of the House.

Why not withdraw the guillotine? Why would the Government not provide for a reasonable period to consider and include in its legislation amendments to improve the agreement and reassure Canadians? That would build consensus. I somehow doubt that any form of accommodation is possible. This Government within weeks of its re-election has shown its true colours. It has been affected by the disease that accompanies the unbridled lunge for power that we saw exhibited in this election. It is the idea that no one, not even Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition with 83 seats in this House, has anything to contribute to a debate on Canada's future.

We in the Liberal Party have amendments to propose. We have improvements to make. We are ready to debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: Let us go.

Mr. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Under our able and principled leader, the Right Hon. Member for Vancouver Quadra (Mr. Turner), we have articulated the concerns of Canadians about this deal. We are equipped to make major improvements to this flawed contract. That is why, although I would much rather debate the substance of this important issue—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: Come back on Monday.

Mr. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso):—I have to add my voice to those of other hon. colleagues on this side of the House against this Draconian measure to curtail and stop debate in this House.

Mr. David Bjornson (Selkirk): Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise as a new Member in this great House to represent the new riding of Selkirk, Manitoba.