

Extension of Sittings

I campaigned in my riding of Prince George—Bulkley Valley on fairness, fairness for the people of Prince George—Bulkley Valley, because we did not have that under the Conservative administration. We had 23 years of combined representation in the City of Prince George and we have seen nothing under the Conservatives.

We want to change that. We do not ask for everything. Most definitely we ask for an opportunity to have our say and our input. Many Members who represent rural ridings like I do had to deal with some of the programs that the Government brought forward and its bungling on issues like the northern tax allowance that affected my constituents in communities like McBride, Burns Lake and Houston. The only thing we asked for was an opportunity to have our say. We did not have that under the Conservatives and now, because with their hijacking of the rules, they are limiting that even further.

Through us, Canadians and the people of my riding have an opportunity to have that say in legislation and on motions before the House. However, as the Government rams this legislation through the House, we are not having that say. If we do not have that say, neither do our constituents.

As we begin to discuss this legislation next week, it is critical that we are given the opportunity to present our amendments and debate fully the legislation. January 1 is not engraved in stone. It is not a date by which we have to pass any legislation. As my colleague, the Member from Victoria stated earlier, it was the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) who set the date for this election, in full knowledge of what kind of timetable he would have.

It is our responsibility as Members from all Parties and all sides of the House to express the concerns that we have over this legislation. I call upon Members opposite to abandon their ways and return the House to its normal practice of reasonable and thoughtful debate.

As an outside observer of this House and its rules for some time, I think it is a pity that it is now rare that we have an opportunity to see full debate. It is an honour that Stanley Knowles is with us in the House from time to time to give guidance about what we must debate. The most important reason why we are here, regardless of where we are from and what we stand for, is to provide input to this House and represent the views of our constituents.

I look forward to next week when we debate the substance of the trade legislation, when we show Members opposite and the Government that we are

serious about representing the concerns of our constituents, the people of British Columbia and, in my case, the people of Prince George—Bulkley Valley.

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for the privilege of addressing this House. As this is the first time I have spoken in the House, I want to thank the voters of my riding who sent me here.

My riding of Halton—Peel is one of the newly created ridings under redistribution and encompasses a number of communities. They include Bolton, Burlington, Georgetown and Acton. My riding is rural and urban. I believe that its make-up is a reflection of the complexion of Canada as a whole. Such a riding will benefit under free trade very strongly.

I believe this was indicated by the fact that the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) chose my riding to kick off his national campaign. He was able to tour a plant in Georgetown that will benefit substantially from free trade and will likely see the creation of many new jobs under the provisions of the Free Trade Agreement.

During the course of the campaign in our riding we took pains to make sure we adequately surveyed manufacturers and retailers in the community. We surveyed all the Chamber of Commerce manufacturing members and different chambers throughout the riding about what free trade will do for them. We asked if they were afraid of it, whether they looked forward to it, and what their business plans would be as a result. Well over 70 per cent of the respondents, not large corporations but small and medium sized businesses from 12 employees to 300, said yes to free trade. They said there is no question that they will benefit from free trade and will likely add employment as a result.

I want to thank the Prime Minister. I want to thank the Government of Canada for its vision. I want to thank them for looking to the future, not to the past or the status quo.

As a new Member I have been somewhat surprised over the last four days at what I have seen and heard in the House. For example, a little while ago we heard the Hon. Member for Winnipeg South (Mr. Axworthy) make some interesting comments. He repeated a statement in the House that he had noted on *Canada A.M.* yesterday. He said: "Unfortunately, an election is just an exercise in raw numbers". How can he believe that? An election is an exercise in democracy. An election is the people speaking. An election is the highest authority that we can have. When the people speak they