

*Private Members' Business*

That is why the hon. member for Calgary Northeast has been driven to propose this kind of motion to this House. He, at least, has seen the light. He has realized what dreadful government the Progressive Conservative Party has brought to Canada. He jumped ship and got out of that party before his own career was destroyed. Many hon. members opposite are going to find their careers come to a very short end come the next federal election.

What is it that the hon. member for Calgary Northeast is really saying in this motion? He is saying that Canadians are entitled to express their own views very directly on a number of key issues that this government has brought to the fore, and to which he believes most Canadians are opposed. I do share his views in that respect. Canadians are opposed to the goods and services tax. They are opposed to the cuts in unemployment insurance. They are opposed to the cuts in VIA Rail. They are opposed to the selling off of Crown corporations. They are opposed to the budget cutbacks. They are opposed to the clawback provisions that the government has introduced. A whole string of bad legislation has been introduced in this Parliament by this government.

The hon. member for Niagara Falls rants and raves about how on every platform he was on during the campaign he spoke about the goods and services tax. Well, did he speak about cuts to VIA Rail? No, he did not. Did he talk about unemployment insurance cutbacks? No, he did not. In fact, the Minister for International Trade said there would not be any changes in the program. Lo and behold, the changes came in within months of the government winning the election.

This government set out to mislead Canadians in the last campaign. It succeeded in misleading Canadians. They were duped into voting for this government in spite of a shocking string of policies that were hidden from view and which we exposed and said: "This kind of thing is going to happen. This government is going to do these things that they are denying today." We asked the questions. We got the answers, and then the answers all changed after the election.

Canadians were misled in 1988. They are now demanding referenda on various issues that this government has brought before this House because they did not know what this government was going to do when the election was held.

In other words, the referendum is an alternative. They are saying: "Look, we are so angry". Canadians are so annoyed at having not been able to choose their representatives on the basis of the facts that they are saying: "We now should have a second crack at this through a referendum." We should be able to have a particular bill brought to us for consideration so we can look at the bill and pass judgment on it and say is this really what we want in this country. There are too many bills that this government has brought in that Canadians do not want, that they are fed up with, and they do not want them passed into law.

I am a staunch supporter of this institution and of our parliamentary government. I firmly believe that, as the hon. member for Niagara Falls has said, over the years this House generally has been representative of the wishes of the Canadian people. Over the years, in a general way, this House has served the Canadian public well and the method of decision-making that we have where the government proposes and the House disposes generally has worked well.

There are problems. I do not say it is perfect. I would be the last person to maintain that but, to use the old quotation, I believe attributable to Sir Winston Churchill, democracy may not be the best form of government, and may be the worst, but it is better than all the others.

I say that bearing in mind the way this Chamber operates. Sure we could improve it, we can make it more representative in various ways and we all look at different ways. But I do not believe the referendum is one of those ways.

Having said what I have said, over the years we have been a Chamber which generally reflects the will of the people of Canada. At the present time that is no longer the case. I say it because this government has done so many things that it did not promise and, indeed, that run completely contrary to its stated promises and intentions.

Frankly, it is an absolute disgrace, Mr. Speaker, and I am sorry to make it sound as though I am being partisan on that issue, but I can understand the frustration of the hon. member for Calgary Northeast in bringing this in. After all, he was driven out of the Conservative caucus