

Motions

States, they have 90 days after the President signs the agreement on January 2.

We do not have the legal text, yet are asked to study the agreement. The House Leader is now proposing a motion which the committee rammed through last night against the wishes of opposition Members. Members of the Opposition on the committee suggested last night that we do want hearings on the so-called trade agreement between Canada and the United States but that two weeks was totally inadequate.

According to the plan which is being put to the House this afternoon, one day will be spent in each province. One day will be spent in British Columbia in one city, one day in Alberta in one city, one day in Saskatchewan, one day in Manitoba, and one day in the Northwest Territories. In the second week we will cover eastern Canada spending one day in Quebec, one day in New Brunswick, one day in Prince Edward Island, one day in Nova Scotia, and one day in Newfoundland.

We are receiving hundreds of letters from groups and individuals who want to be heard on this most important agreement which the Government itself says is one of the most significant economic measures since the Second World War.

We are asked to study, in only a few weeks, one of the most significant economic measures which will impact on almost every economic walk of life in Canada. We are sitting in Ottawa this week, as we will be the week after the break, then will spend two weeks on the road and be expected to make a report. If we are to pursue the proposal made by the Conservative majority on the committee, hundreds of individuals and groups will not have a chance to be heard. We will be pushing through a report of the committee without adequate hearings.

I remind the House that when we dealt with such things as the Crows Nest Pass rates and the pharmaceutical Bill we spent several months in committee hearing from individuals and groups. Those matters were important but not as important as this agreement. We are asked to hear the people of Canada in two weeks, one week in the West and one week in the East. We think that is totally inadequate. We tried to amend the motion last night by providing for additional hearings across the country. The government majority turned that down. They are trying to ram this through. They do not want individuals and groups to be heard as they should. We will oppose this motion.

Ms. Sheila Capps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to speak in opposition to this motion. We have heard from government Members time and again that they would like to have this so-called Mulroney deal discussed. However, the reality is that when an opportunity arises to study the deal in detail we get absolutely no co-operation from the Government.

I am from the most industrialized riding in Canada, the riding of Hamilton East. There are more factories per square foot in my riding than in any other riding in the country. I, for one, feel highly insulted that as a result of this committee's

Conservative majority only one day will be spent in each province to hold hearings which will not permit the voices of all people to be heard.

Does the Government really believe that the Province of Ontario stops in Toronto? Does the Government really believe that the Province of British Columbia stops in Victoria? Does the Government really believe that the Province of Newfoundland stops in St. John's?

If the Government were really serious about examining this agreement in detail, it would permit full hearings which would include travel, not only to the capitals of each province but to other communities and to rural areas which may be affected.

[Translation]

The fact that this committee, with its Conservative majority, is trying to put this Agreement before Parliament without even holding hearings outside Parliament is an insult to Canadians. They are not going to Quebec and they are not going to New Brunswick. They are afraid the Canadian people will see details of the Agreement that include compromises on questions of language, culture and national sovereignty. Those are the points that will be affected by this Agreement. This Government with this literally crushing majority is trying to prevent discussion and full debate on the Mulroney-Reagan deal.

[English]

The issue before us is possibly the most important question to face Canadians because it deals with the very future of our country. It deals with whether our children can be Canadian. It deals with whether we will have control over our own laws. It deals with whether we will have control over our own sovereign destiny. It deals with whether we will say yes to Canada or whether we are prepared to sell out our country merely to make the bigger buck by an association with the United States.

If the Government were really serious about giving Canadians a chance to examine this bad deal in detail it would encourage full hearings, not only in capital cities but in every part of this country. In fact, it would take the question to the people.

The Government is afraid that if Canadians see the fine print they will start to realize that this deal compromises our sovereign rights in our own law-making, our access to energy, our future rights to guarantee cultural policy, our right to a safe environment, our right to have safe streets to walk on and to guarantee a quality of life which is different from that which exists in the United States.

If the Government is not afraid to examine those questions, why is it using a muzzle to restrict debate to one day in each of the capital cities of this country? The capital cities of this country are not the only areas in which Canadians deserve a voice in this most important question. I believe it is an outrageous abuse of parliamentary majority that the Government would choose to move in such an insidious way to ram