

Government Orders

The next best quotation: The people honour and praise. Of course we know that that is not true. We are going down the list. Next: The people fear. And then, the people hate. I am not happy to say that the people in my community not only say that the Prime Minister is not a good leader, but they dislike him. Some people say, "We hate him". I think that is a sad statement for anybody to make, even an opposition member.

The former leader of the Liberal Party took us in the wrong direction, but at least he would give the country direction. It was the wrong direction but the country respected that person as a leader. This country is wandering without any direction.

• (1720)

When the best leader's work is done, the people say: "We did it ourselves. We did it." With the operations of this government, there is no "we". It is a royal "we" or "I".

A chief is a man who assumes responsibility. He says: "I was beaten." He does not say: "My men and women were beaten." I think the Prime Minister should say: "I am a beaten person, but the rest of you do not have to come down with me. It is not necessary."

This is the second anniversary, and all MPs are happy about that I am sure. An anniversary is a happy event. We as MPs get to go to many anniversaries and celebrate with people on special occasions, on 50th and 60th anniversaries, as I did last week, and it makes us happy. This anniversary does not make Canadian people happy. They despair. It is a dirge. There is a pall over the country. There is gloom and doom everywhere. It is a sad state of affairs.

An hon. member: Only in your riding.

Mr. Butland: Only in my riding, and I will get to that. Only in my riding, caused by this government's policies. That is why there is a pall in my community. The government shut down the steel industry. It is impossible to sell any steel in the United States. It is impossible because of high interest rates and the free trade agreement, which this government said: "Without free trade, these shipments could be subject to quotas, increased tariffs, embargoes or freezes."

Where will the extra production go? I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, it will not go anywhere because the United States has precluded us from selling any kind of steel in the U.S. market.

I know the hon. member for Burlington is a very sincere man. He is an expert in steel, but surely he must agree that this free trade agreement has been an abomination for the steel industry in this country.

Going along with high interest rates and the inflated Canadian dollar is a good reason for the dirge and pall in my community, as the minister has cited. It is at their doorstep that 6,000 people were out of work for 15 weeks. As of today, there will be 600 or 800 people called back. This situation is most unfortunate.

The sad part of it is the labour dispute may not be deemed to have ended. I hesitate to say this, Mr. Speaker, but the workers may not receive unemployment insurance unless there is an immediate change of policy, some compassion shown by the minister and the department so that these people will have some hope of at least a reasonable Christmas.

Don't say that it is only my constituency where there is a pall. It can cite any number of constituencies, including those of government members which must be suffering as well. It is a litany of lost jobs and closures right across this country.

The policies play no favourites. It is not only Sault Ste. Marie. It is right across the country. I am sure constituents are telling government members this each and every day that they go into their constituencies. If I were on the government side, I certainly would not want to go into my constituency. It is a government without a leader and I think the crew is ready to mutiny.

I understand that it is difficult to get members to go to committee.

Mr. Boudria: What committees?

Mr. Dingwall: "What committees?", they say. When they do go, I understand they are very silent because if they speak, that will give away everything. They do not want to be there to defend any of the government policies.

An hon. member: Indefensible policies.

Mr. Butland: They are indefensible policies. Oka, the Persian Gulf, PetroCan, Open Skies policies, the GST, the clawback and the free trade agreement, are impossible to defend. I would not go to committee either. I would not want to go to committee.