

*Government Orders*

has used the time allocation measure more than this government? What government has choked off public hearings, presentations and briefing on certain issues more than this government?

Right now we have a committee of the Senate visiting Atlantic Canada. It is doing that because this government has not allowed public expression and presentations with respect to the unemployment insurance issue. So I must say that I am a little surprised when I hear the chairman of the House of Commons finance committee making this strong pitch for analysis. But maybe it is a genuine change and if so I welcome it.

I do want to see Bill C-52 go to a committee, be it a legislative committee or a standing committee. I want it to go to a committee as soon as possible because there is a lot of work and study to be done here. This is a very complex and technical bill. As I said, it is going to have an impact on thousands and thousands of Canadians. We need the public input.

I got some idea of how Canadians feel about this when we Liberal members from Manitoba held day long hearings on proposed possible pension reforms last summer. We were deluged. People really care about this kind of an issue because it permeates our lives. We work for a certain time and then, if we are lucky and if we have good health, we retire and go on pension. We need a kind of income that will support us with some kind of dignity. Hopefully, most of us will have a standard of living that is not that far removed from the kind of standard of living we had when we were working.

• (1230)

I want to see this bill examined as thoroughly as possible. I would hope that if it does indeed go to a legislative committee, as I would expect, that the government majority would not use its majority to choke off briefings, to choke off presentations. Let us get a good airing out of this issue. Let us hear from Canadians because I know that they have a lot to say.

I would like to enter into the record in a few minutes a letter that I received from a constituent which deals with a particular provision in Bill C-52. But I will get to that in a moment.

I think that what I want to say now, and it is all part and parcel of this particular debate on Bill C-52, has to do with how Canadians feel about their federal government right now, how Canadians feel about their country as a whole. You know, Mr. Speaker, I, like the rest of the

294 MPs in this House, have just come off the Christmas-New Year break, if you can call it a break. I think most of us worked out of our riding offices.

During that break we had the opportunity to listen and to hear from a lot of constituents. The message that I get when I talk to constituents is that something has gone wrong in this country, something is amiss. They use that old expression, "There is something rotten in Denmark". You can change the name Denmark to Canada.

I think that there is a growing number of Canadians who are feeling and saying that there is something wrong in this country. We are on the wrong tracks. We are going in the wrong direction. Things are beginning to unravel. They are coming apart. We are beginning to lose the institutions that we worked so darn hard for some many years to build up, institutions that have served this country for so long and so well and we now see them coming apart at the seams.

Canadians are not stupid. They are not stupid. They are very astute. They can see it. They tell us that over and over again. They have not got a full grasp of it all yet, but they are getting there. I think they are getting right down to the nub of it.

I say to the members on the other side, if they are not listening, and listening very closely, they are going to find themselves in deep, deep trouble. Maybe a lot of us would not really care about those people on that side being in deep, deep trouble, but we all care about our country.

This government was not elected to carry out some kind of revolution, and I mean that sincerely. This government was not elected to carry out a revolution. But what do we see?

We see the decimation of VIA Rail. Were the government members elected to decimate VIA Rail? Not on your life, Mr. Speaker. I do not remember them saying much about doing away with 51 per cent of the routes. They did not say anything like that back in the 1988 election campaign.

What did they say about the GST? They did not say a heck of a lot, did they, back in the election campaign? They talked about what? The second phase of tax reform. Some tax reform! It is not tax reform at all. It is a tax grab. Do you know what, Mr. Speaker? This government was not elected to impose this kind of monstrous tax grab. It was not elected to bring in the clawback. It was not elected to attack seniors in that particular way.