

Extension of Sittings

I am not going to talk about free trade at the present time. I hope to have that opportunity later on. I am not even going to talk about the motion that is on the Order Paper, a motion that is there with the obvious intention of cutting down debate on free trade. That is exactly what it does, and the amendment makes it more certain. I would like to discuss that amendment.

Earlier, the Hon. Member for Edmonton East (Mr. Harvey) said that he was inclined to think that perhaps the amendment made it better, and perhaps he should consider supporting it. I do not see it that way at all. To me the amendment makes a bad motion worse.

The original motion dealt with anything that might come up in this session, and stated that we were going to treat everything alike. We all know that the amendment will pass. It will state that the only situation for which we will use this extreme power will be the most important issue that has ever come before the Canadian Parliament. People on both sides have said that. It is not going to be used for anything of a minor nature. It will not be used for the little things that the Government may bring up. It is going to be used in only one instance, and that is the instance that is the most important issue ever to come before the Canadian Parliament. That is not an improvement to the original motion. It is zeroing in and saying that we are here to pass this Bill, regardless of the devices to be used, regardless of the changes that have to be made to the rules of this House.

• (2210)

The Government is prepared to do whatever it has to do in order to meet its political agenda. Regardless of what it has to do in terms of the workings of this place, regardless of what it has to do in terms of the rights of the Members of this place, it is going to meet that political agenda.

That is one reason for putting forward the amendment. It makes a bad motion worse. Another reason for opposing the amendment is that it sends up a flag. It tells us that whenever this Government has something important, whenever it has a measure involving a political agenda, it will bring in a similar motion, a motion which will again restrict the rule changes to the one issue. In that way, it can say that it is not a course that is being followed in every case. If it is an issue that is not terribly important, it will not use the sledge-hammer approach. But when anything important comes up, it will use the biggest sledge-hammer it has at its disposal.

What this Government is saying, in effect, is that there is no limit to what it will do, no limit to the powers it will take unto itself to accomplish its political agenda.

While it is hard to conceive of the motion before us being made worse, Mr. Speaker, that in fact is what this amendment does, and it does so by revealing, in all truth, the precise plans that this Government has for this the Thirty-fourth Parliament.

I shall have absolutely no hesitation, Mr. Speaker, in voting against the proposed amendment.

Ms. Barbara Greene (Don Valley North): Mr. Speaker, by way of introduction, I am the new Member for the new riding of Don Valley North, in the City of North York, in Metropolitan Toronto.

The riding of Don Valley North is one of the most interesting ridings in Canada, with 62 per cent of the electorate being apartment dwellers and 45 per cent being immigrants. It comprises a varied cross-section of Canadian society, ranging from those living in \$1 million homes to those on welfare. It has beautiful ravines and wonderful shopping plazas, and is home to many businesses, all of which make it the envy of any community in the world.

The City of North York is the home to many multinational corporations which provide jobs for many of the citizens of Metropolitan Toronto, as it is the home to many hotels. In addition, it is the home of the Metropolitan Board of Trade.

It is a cosmopolitan city. It is a city whose citizens enjoy working and who live there very successfully, and it is a city whose citizens are served well by the government sector.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the people of Don Valley North for electing me to be their representative in the House of Commons. At the outset, I considered it to be an easy riding for me to win. It was an area in which I had been very successful in municipal politics. However, following the televised Leaders' debate and the campaign of the Liberal Party against free trade, I began to notice a change in the attitudes of the electorate as I met them at the door. People were scared. They were struggling with the issue of free trade. They were attempting to understand the issue—and I was impressed by the lengths to which they went to understand the issue. The supply of the free trade synopsis that we had in our office went like hot cakes. We distributed as much information as we had on the free trade issue, and we attempted to answer questions at the door about the issue.