

Extension of Sittings

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The House has heard the Hon. Member asking for unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Yes.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I do not hear unanimous consent. Resuming debate with the Hon. Member for Gloucester—Carleton.

• (1930)

[Translation]

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Madam Speaker, it is an honour for me to address today the Canadian Parliament. Since the tender age of 10, I have been living in the shadow of our Parliament. As a child, I have often seen Prime Minister Mackenzie King walking three blocks from my home. When I was 8 or 9, I have seen him strolling by, and a few years later I had the pleasure to meet Prime Minister St. Laurent and, also, Mr. John Diefenbaker, and almost all those who succeeded after him.

I have the honour to speak for the first time in this Parliament and this is a very special occasion for me. Like several other new Members, I find myself involved in a procedural debate . . .

For almost 20 years I had the privilege of working at the municipal and regional levels, in the Ottawa-Carleton region, and procedure was often discussed, but it was quite simple.

Nobody was ever denied the chance to speak on the matter. There was always discipline. I have always noted, at both the municipal and regional levels, that people have respect for those who have the floor, that other politicians listen, because when you listen you can always learn something while, if people shout or, even worse, throw insults at each other, they admit to a certain ignorance, in the broad sense of the word. However, when one listens, one always learns something. Since Tuesday morning, I have learned a lot. But I must admit that I am still learning about procedure.

However, Madam Speaker, I would like to do exactly what my constituents asked me to do, that is go to Parliament to speak on various issues. The people who elected me are from the new riding of Carleton-Gloucester. This riding was formed by taking a part of Glengarry—Prescott, that is a section of Cumberland, the major part of the city of Gloucester, that I represented for nearly 20 years, the whole of the municipalities of Rideau and Osgoode, a good part of the city of Ottawa, all of which makes up a territory of 350 square miles with a voting population of over 77,000.

I am very proud to have been elected. I am quite touched by the fact that I was elected by 31 000 voters. I make it a rule of going door to door during election campaigns. But this time I had to cover a larger area than the City of Gloucester and I did door-to-door campaigning in every municipality in nearly every area. Two municipalities, Rideau and Osgoode, were represented by a Conservative MP, as was a large part of the City of Gloucester. As one of the main themes of my campaign, I asked people first what they thought about free trade in general, and then what they thought about that agreement. The answer was simple: everybody was in favour of free trade. They thought it was a good thing, but the public at large or the people I met during my door-to-door campaign or while speaking in public asked: What is this agreement about? How will it affect us? Does it refer to goods only? This particular agreement does not affect goods only, it also deals with services and investments.

Those two items worried people because, you see, Madam Speaker, it is a bit like buying a house and having a mortgage for the first time. A wise person will make sure to have a competent adviser check all the clauses of the mortgage or the selling agreement. Any lawyer will tell you that it is not wise to buy a house or do any other kind of deal without checking the agreement first.

During the election campaign, I had the opportunity to read a lot about free trade. There are many interesting things to know about free trade. However, what will be the impact of the deal? This worries people because they do not know what the effects of this deal will be. This is why we need a debate, Madam Speaker. We need to have someone sit down and explain what happens with this deal. We need to go further than to speak to a single politician. If you talk to many politicians representing the Conservatives who are now in government, the NDP or my party, the Liberal Party, you will get three different points of view. And I suppose there are other opinions across the country.

It would therefore be rational, wise and mostly prudent to be able to discuss free-trade and its effects.

I am told that one must have faith. I have faith, Madam Speaker, but not when I realize that this deal could have an impact on the workers of today, that it could adversely affect my own children or grandchildren or those of others. Anybody willing to keep his eyes open realizes that the philosophy and the method of operation in Canada is going to make a 180 degrees turn. Of course, if one takes only into account political aspects, one could totally disagree.