

Government Orders

What I would like to try to understand is what perversity of the Canadian population reduces Conservative popularity to 12 per cent, to create the most hated Prime Minister in the history of Canada, a Prime Minister that 70 per cent of Canadians say has not a snowball's chance in hell of being re-elected. All of that I suppose is a testimony to the tremendous success, the tremendous appeal and the responsiveness of this government to the Canadian people.

No, this hon. gentleman should spend less time worrying about his bogeyman and start asking the question of himself that this government has obviously failed to ask and that is, why does virtually every single Canadian, whether he or she is in a bread line, sleeping on the street, working in a factory about to close and worrying about their future livelihood, wait for just one thing, and that is for 1993 to arrive so people like him and his government will be driven out of office.

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, they always say the proof of the pudding is in the taste and there you go. If you noticed in his remarks, he did not address Bill C-60. He went on the attack of the Prime Minister and his lack of popularity in the country. I agree totally with his numbers. If it is at 10 per cent, 11 per cent or 12 per cent, that is not the issue. It does not matter. If the hon. member wants to ask me why he is low in the polls and why our party is, I will tell him why it is low. It is because as a government we are dealing with reality.

I can mention a number of the initiatives that we have dealt with that have not made me particularly popular, or my colleague next to me from Halton—Peel popular back home, but at least they have respect for us for having done what was necessary. What has happened in the last number of years in this country is that we finally woke up and said: "Listen, we have got responsibilities here". We have a mountain of debt over us and we have to deal with it. We can deal with it in a number of ways. First, we will have to take a look at reducing services in areas where we can, with the least amount of pain as possible. We will also have to take a look at increasing revenues. That is what we have done, if we take a look at the GST. That is what we did. We dealt with the reality that we need tax dollars to pay for the programs they enjoy back home.

• (1630)

We had to take a look at base closures, cuts in VIA Rail, changes to the UIC Act, and most of all the one that they love to rail against: free trade. That is one they love to attack, but it is not working because eventually Canadians will see through the facade.

It is interesting to note that everything we have done has proven right or is close to being proven right. For example, let us look at the base closures. We took a big hit on that one in Summerside, P.E.I. Summerside, P.E.I. is enjoying more prosperity than any other part of Prince Edward Island at the present time. There are all kinds of rejuvenation within the economy of Summerside, P.E.I. because the government went in and fixed the hurt that I suppose we inflicted on them with the base closure. That is a reality. We did not forget those people, and right now Summerside is prospering.

Let us take a look at VIA Rail. We took a tumble in the polls when we had to cut back VIA Rail services, but VIA Rail is now in a profitable position. It looks as if it can expand its operation, modernize its operation. It is a success story.

On the UIC act, for example, it was the same. We had to reform the UIC act. Now they blame us for having done that. We feel that Canadians have to be working to contribute to our economy.

Those are some of the realities we have had to deal with. It has been tough. It has not been easy. That is one of the reasons we are low in the polls.

Mr. McCurdy: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. If the time was split, how much time remains?

Mr. Thompson: I rise on the same point of order, Mr. Speaker. Maybe it is because the time difference or the time allotted over here has something to do with the facts. We do address the issue, we do address the bill, and we do not try to disguise it in rhetoric.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I remind the hon. member that the government party has indicated to the Chair that it has split the time for speeches into 10-minute segments. That is why I must give the floor to the hon. member for Halton—Peel for 10 minutes only.

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to enter this debate and to say a few words. I will not be overly lengthy in what I have to say, but I