

Government Orders

Where are the members of the Chamber? On television. While we are in this Chamber, we see them all standing around at the Chateau Laurier watching the announcement of a leadership candidate for the Tory Party.

• (1230)

Their duty is here. The House's duty is here. The members of this country should know. Anybody who happens to be afflicted with a habit of watching this television channel should know it is the most contemptible behaviour I have ever seen in my 30 years in public office in this country. The contempt this government has for this issue and the closure it intends to bring into this House indicate it is frightened the Canadian people will find out exactly what is going on with this bill.

I heard the Minister for International Trade get up, recite statistics and interpretations, and attack colleagues in the Liberal Party and us. I understand that is a political game. But why does he not go on national television and have a debate with the Liberal member and me? If this issue is so important as the government says, why does it show it is afraid by closing the debate and giving only two days' notice? Our party will have only five speakers out of 45 duly elected members of Parliament whose constituents pay their wages and demand they come here. What about the right to speak? Only five will be able to speak.

The Liberals may have eight speakers. It is absolutely disgusting behaviour by a government that claimed it was interested in parliamentary reform. It is craft use of power and that has to go on the record too.

If things are so good in this country why are they so bad? We have had the pompous statements of a government that is afraid to deal with this debate openly and among the Canadian people. We have heard how it interprets the trade figures to show expanse in trade and great opportunities. Tell it to the two million people a week who line up for food in this country. The greatest growth economically has been in the number of poor in this country.

Transfer payments to the provinces are beginning to evaporate. The core and heartbeat of the secondary and tertiary industries, part of this country that pays the taxes so we can provide the services, has been ripped out of the guts of Ontario and downtown Montreal.

My good friends in the Liberal Party get up and say: "Oh, it is the NDP's fault in Ontario". We get up and say: "Oh, it is the Liberals' fault in Quebec". We point fingers at each other: "It is your party that did it". In reality it is not the Liberal Party in Quebec or the NDP in Ontario that did it. That Tory government over there did it. It is the one responsible for it.

What is regrettable, as we play these little political games at the provincial level, is the absence of a position of the Official Opposition in abrogating the free trade agreement and opposing NAFTA.

My good friend in the Liberal Party left the message today that this bill will implement NAFTA. He did not do this by guile but he made a fundamental error. This bill will be passed by the government majority but it will not implement NAFTA. The implementation date is January 1, 1994. The Canadian people have the right to ask the Conservatives if they are elected to government whether they will implement on January 1, 1994. They have a right to ask to the Liberal Party and the NDP that question as well.

Any attempt to allow the Canadian people to believe that this battle is over is wrong and false. The one hopeful aspect of this government's behaviour is it does not have enough time to avoid that January 1 deadline to implement the bill.

The Canadian people will have an election. During that election campaign, the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party, the New Democrats, the Bloc Quebecois and Independents will be asked this one fundamental question: "If I vote for you and your party forms a majority, will you implement NAFTA on January 1, 1994?" We know where the Conservatives stand. Their answer is yes. Our answer is no. Here is the question now in front of the Canadian people: Is it yes or no from the Liberal Party? They can say all they want—

• (1235)

Mr. Blaikie: They say maybe yes, maybe no.

Mr. Barrett: Oh, no, maybe is not good enough. The Canadian people have a right to know. Leaving the impression that it is being implemented is not correct. It was an undesigned error by my friend from Etobicoke. The reality is that the implementation date is January 1 and the electorate will have a decision to make about that.