

*Extension of Sittings*

We have not had any of the usual discussions at the opening of Parliament. We have been plunged into debates on procedural matters, and now a debate based on a closure motion that was passed this morning and is cutting off this debate later today.

It is a poor way to run a House of Commons, and the Government has that responsibility. It is a poor way to run a government, and the Government has that responsibility.

I say to Hon. Members opposite that I hope that having heard the very reasonable arguments which have been advanced on this side of the House throughout the day, they will consider exercising some independence of judgment and voting against this resolution which will change and in effect abrogate the rules of this House.

We could have a full, free, honest and open debate on free trade in which all Members may participate fully in committee and at all the various reading stages of the Bill. Rather than have midnight sittings and holiday sittings, I invite those Members to exercise that judgment today and vote with us to defeat this motion.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean Corbeil (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour indeed for me to be here today and to make my maiden speech in such an impressive forum rooted in tradition and history. As I rise for the first time as the newly elected Member for the Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies riding, Mr. Speaker, I should like, if I may, to express my sincere gratitude to all the men and women in that new riding who have granted me the privilege of representing them in this House and, together with my honourable colleagues and under the undisputed leadership of the Right Hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), to be part of the first majority government for the first time ever over the past fifty years to be re-elected for a second term.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Corbeil:** Mr. Speaker, I represent a riding which is situated at the eastern limit of Montreal Island and which is made up of two Montreal wards together with an autonomous municipality, Ville d'Anjou, which I had the honour to represent as its mayor for 15 consecutive years before seeking my election as Member of the House of Commons.

The Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies riding is very active in the commercial and industrial fields, has a population of about 100,000 people of diverse ethnic origin. It is made up of a very large Francophone majority, along with significant Italian, Haitian and Anglophone

communities, as well as various other ethnic communities which have learned to live and work together in harmony.

My political progression in municipal affairs was a source of great satisfaction for me during all those years and I am grateful to all the men and women—the volunteers and community organizations, my municipal colleagues and supporters—who helped me during that period.

However, Mr. Speaker, I must admit that I was overjoyed to have been elected as a Member of this distinguished assembly and that I was really looking forward to coming to the Canadian Capital to represent the men and women of my riding, of my Province of Quebec, of my country Canada. I must admit also that this legitimate desire to come here to discuss the major issues which concern our fellow citizens has been considerably dampened by what performance we have witnessed so far during this session.

Mr. Speaker, one of the main reasons I agreed to run in the election was my conviction that free trade is the key to future Canadian prosperity. During a campaign that was long and hard for all players, we had to spend a lot of energy and effort to reassure the most vulnerable members of society, the poor and the elderly, who were told by representatives of the two parties now in the Opposition that their pensions and social benefits were threatened by an agreement which we think will bring prosperity to the whole country.

But what is distressing in this spectacle we have been subjected to since the beginning of the week and the session is to realize that the people opposite have not yet understood that this Government has been re-elected because it combines two intrinsic qualities required to form a government citizens can trust: an unchallenged leadership and a credibility built up over the years. And we have seen this week that Hon. Members of both Opposition parties are on that side of the House precisely because they do not have sufficient credibility to deserve the trust of most Canadians.

With great emotional speeches, they would have us believe that the people did not make a clear-cut decision on November 21. They seem to be pretending to ignore all the governments that led this country in recent years; they were governments that had a majority of seats, because that is how the Canadian Parliament works. And they juggle figures and use all sorts of percentages to try to show and to lead the Canadian people, whose intelligence they seem to greatly underestimate, to believe that the next government should be led by the minority.