

Extension of Sittings

That is the definition of power as those Members see it. If they have 150 seats they can do anything they want. Whatever Canadians have said, or whatever they have told Canadians, they have no more regard for that than for any other promises they have made, and for whatever Canadians have said. They only consider the number of seats they have in Parliament and the power it gives them to do anything they want.

The Conservatives are attempting through this resolution to use their power in terms of numbers to ram down the throat of this House of Commons legislation that has not been accepted by the people of Canada. They used fear tactics during the last election campaign. They are using fear tactics now.

Mr. Della Noce: You cannot talk about fear tactics.

Mr. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): You attempted to use the majority you have in the House not to involve yourself in a healing process or a debate with the people of Canada, but to pass this agreement on the Prime Minister's schedule. This is the last act of submission by the Canadian Government to the United States.

It is shameful that its Parliament has to go through this kind of measure just to see the Tories submit once more to the tactics of the United States Government. It makes one wonder what kind of negotiations went on. The Conservatives went to the heel of the United States. They took orders from the United States. There was no process of negotiation.

This agreement is for the benefit of the United States, not for Canada. The Government is simply serving the priorities and requirements of Ronald Reagan rather than the people of Canada. One can see this in its priorities in the House and its efforts to get this legislation through prior to January 1. It is simply a way of submitting again and again to the United States and reducing the image of this country in the eyes of the world and the eyes of Canadians.

Mr. Ken Atkinson (St. Catharines): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the people of St. Catharines for their support and to say how proud I am to represent the City of St. Catharines here in the Parliament of Canada.

I was interested in the comments just made by the Hon. Member opposite. He spoke of a loss of sovereignty. A similar argument was raised by the same Party with regard to the Auto Pact when it came into effect. The Auto Pact is very important to my community. St.

Catharines has prospered as a result of the Auto Pact. It is the one form of free trade we can look to as an example of how it works for this country. As the Hon. Member for Chateauguay (Mr. Lopez) said, we would like to spread it to the rest of the country. That is what the people of St. Catharines would like.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, Hear!

Mr. Atkinson: The Auto Pact has not resulted in a loss of sovereignty in Southern Ontario or St. Catharines. Obviously the argument made during the election campaign still holds true. Up to 80 per cent of the tariffs have been reduced over the years, since 1947. Canada has not lost its sovereignty as a result of that. That is a fallacious argument and should not be continued.

The motion we are debating tonight is a procedural one to extend the hours of this House in order that more Members can be heard with regard to the Free Trade Agreement. We have heard other new Members state how saddened they are because of the loss of their rights and the fact that the first debate in which they participate is on a procedural matter rather than something more substantial. I share that view.

I sat in this majestic place on Monday during the election of the Speaker. There was a short Speech from the Throne relating to one issue. When we returned to this Chamber, a motion was placed to the House stating that the Speech from the Throne be taken into consideration "later this day". That was the extent of the motion and I did not think there was anything unusual about it. We came here to do a job and why would we not consider that speech? Much to my surprise, rather than the motion passing without great difficulty, five Members rose, the bells rang for 30 minutes and we had a recorded vote.

This side of the House did not set the tone for this session of Parliament. The tone was set in the very first instance with regard to that motion. Since then we understood what we were going to face in trying to get a debate on the free trade legislation. We have still not succeeded in doing that today.

We are here discussing a procedural matter which began at two o'clock this afternoon. We are still debating whether we will pass this procedural motion to extend the hours of the House in order that more individuals can be heard on the free trade legislation.