

Extension of Sitings

Let us not get into the numbers game, and let us not be on the slippery slope of suspending the rules of a democratic parliament. It is not needed. It is not necessary. The Government can get its Bill whether it is next week, a month from now or two months from now. The Government still gets its Bill. Why bother? Why create all this unnecessary, unneeded activity about suspending the rules? If we do not have rules that remain in place, we can suspend rules by unanimous consent. We can make changes. We can do anything we want by unanimous consent. In the years I have been here we have done that many, many times.

Mr. Prud'homme: Yes.

Mr. Benjamin: We have suspended one or more rules on numerous occasions.

I am sad that the Conservative Government is just as dumb as the Liberal one was.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Benjamin: I must say that even the Liberals did not have nerve enough to go this far. The Conservatives have now set a new distance in belabouring, impinging, upon the rules of Parliament and parliamentary democracy.

I want to say something about why we are doing this.

Mr. Prud'homme: I rise on a point of order. I know that the Hon. Member talked generally about Liberals being as dumb as Conservatives. We all have an opinion on that. Is the Member going to announce tonight that he and his Party are going to disband since his leader during the campaign said that we are entering into a two-Party system?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The Hon. Member for Regina—Lumsden.

Mr. Benjamin: Madam Speaker, I hope you will deduct that 20 seconds from my time but, in any event, I can recall similar kinds of remarks from various and sundry Liberals, starting with Mr. Trudeau. If my hon. friend is sensitive about the cut and thrust of the campaign before, during or after, then maybe he should go to a retirement home.

Mr. Prud'homme: Madam Speaker, I have another point of order. I would be delighted to retire if the Hon. Member would like to join me.

• (1920)

Mr. Benjamin: I would like to continue by expanding on something the Hon. Member for Duvernay had to

say. He may well have a point. I am not sure yet. The Hon. Member agrees that we should suspend the rules of Parliament, suspend parliamentary democracy. Why? Well, because the closing of the Gillette plant has nothing to do with free trade. They have been going to rationalize that plant for the last two years. I will take the hon. gentleman at his word, but I do have a question for him and all other Government Members. If the free trade deal is so good for Canada, if it means so many more jobs, how come that Gillette plant is being rationalized? Why is the plant in Georgia not being rationalized into a plant in Quebec?

I am just an innocent stubble-jumping prairie boy. I would appreciate it if somebody would explain why I cannot find a single plant in the United States or Mexico being rationalized into Canada. Perhaps the trade deal is good, who knows. I will not condemn the Government, far be it from me. However, if it is so good, I would like somebody, anybody on the Government side to explain why the Government needs to suspend the rules of Parliament, and why these plants are not rationalizing into Canada and not the United States, or why Canadian corporations are hiring Mexicans at 65 cents an hour to make components. I would appreciate some answers, and then perhaps I might come onside. Do not bet on it, but I might.

I have a mandate from my constituency to fight to protect the Canadian Wheat Board. Our problem in Assiniboia and Gravelbourg was that the Tories got more of the Liberal vote than we did, which proves my point again: what the hell is the difference?

Mrs. Sparrow: Come on, you can tell the difference.

Mr. Benjamin: Supply management, poultry, eggs, and the Western Grain Transportation Act are down the drain. My friend, the Hon. Member for Souris—Moose Mountain (Mr. Gustafson) knows it. The Minister for International Trade (Mr. Crosbie) has already admitted that the ink was hardly dry on the ballots and it was up for grabs, and he knows it.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I am sorry, I must interrupt the Hon. Member. His time has expired.

Mr. Benjamin: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if I could have the unanimous consent of my good friends opposite for another couple of minutes.