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national farmers union
In Union Is Strength

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

HARPER GOVERNMENT STEPS UP EFFORTS TO DEFEAT DEMOCRACY

Dear Editor,

Seven months ago, I published a letter documenting the Harper Government's deliberate actions to defeat democracy in relation to the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) issue.

Last Thursday, May 17, David Anderson, MP for Cypress Hills – Grasslands, was at it again, disrupting the business of the House of Commons Agriculture Committee in order to stop a motion coming forward from the NDP. The motion called for the federal Auditor General to investigate the conduct and spending of the Harper government in its handling of the CWB.

But it turned out the anti-democratic methods used by Anderson were not an isolated incident. Similar tactics were employed that same week by the Harper Conservatives in the House Official Languages Committee, the House International Trade Committee and the House Defense Committee.

The pattern quickly became clear when a 200-page secret Conservative handbook on disrupting Parliament surfaced.

The handbook, which could have been called "*Defeating Democracy for Dummies*", outlined how to make sure Parliamentary Committees were prevented from hearing evidence from credible witnesses, and even how to shut down the Committee's work completely.

So it turns out that Anderson's efforts to hide from the Auditor General and paralyze the Agriculture Committee can be characterized as "just following orders."

The Harper Conservatives' backroom maneuvers have now been pulled from the shadows and exposed to the hard light of public scrutiny. As a result, more Canadians will now understand what farmers have been up against in our battle to maintain the CWB and the hundreds of millions of extra dollars we risk losing if our marketing agency is dismantled.

More importantly, more Canadians will now understand how fragile our democratic system actually is, and how important it is for us to defend it.

Yours truly,

Stewart Wells
President
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