

Mr. Clark: Tell us what is in the bill.

Mr. MacFarlane: Were you not instructed by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre not to speak on the bill now but to speak on this motion?

Mr. Clark: What is in the bill?

Mr. MacFarlane: Were you not instructed in that regard?

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Order, please. Address the Chair.

Mr. MacFarlane: Mr. Speaker, it is, indeed, the responsibility of the government to present legislation.

An hon. Member: And you have not done so.

Mr. MacFarlane: It is the responsibility of the opposition to criticize the legislation and, if it can, amend it for betterment, or in a way that the government thinks it is better, since the government represents the majority of the people and it is the government's responsibility, in the final analysis, to bear responsibility for the legislation, any amendments by the opposition, and changes made in committee. The government is responsible for every single thing that comes from parliament, and the people make the judgment. That is what you seem to forget in the opposition. Hon. members over there seem to forget that ultimately the government will always pay the debt of responsibility.

Members of the oppositions quite often bring in extraneous matters in an attempt to destroy the credibility of a person like the Minister of Finance. Hon. members often talk about him, as the Leader of the Opposition did, in a ridiculous fashion. I would not think once of speaking like that about the lowest backbencher on either side of the House. I would not waste my time trying to destroy personal credibility. I will talk with hon. members opposite; I will joke with them; I will have a few words with them, and laugh, but I will not attack a member personally in an attempt to show that the person is not capable of performing a task.

An hon. Member: Would you call him a separatist?

Mr. MacFarlane: The government ultimately must consider the future of this country, and will have to negotiate a new constitution. It must do so on the basis that there will remain a strong federal government, and the present case is an indication of the strength this federal government has in the face of all adversity, criticism, and opposition. This government will represent the people by presenting legislation and, as it is doing now, through a motion for the allocation of time to deal with the matter.

Mr. Heward Grafftey (Brome-Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker, that is quite an act to follow.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I wonder why such a motion is proposed now when the minister is conducting negotiations with the province

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of Quebec. A few days ago we in the opposition supported an amendment to set aside that bill for one month so that the present government would be able to renegotiate the proposal concerning the sales tax with the province of Quebec and all the provinces. The government voted against our amendment to set aside the bill for one month and now, Mr. Speaker, we are faced with a motion for closure. What a joke Mr. Speaker! During this debate on the sales tax, where are all the Quebec members, Mr. Speaker? And let me say this afternoon to the Quebec members that the people from Quebec are listening with interest to know what is most important for them: the interests of the Liberal party or the legitimate interests of their fellow citizens of the province of Quebec.

Where were the hon. member for Matane (Mr. De Bané), the hon. member for Compton (Mr. Tessier) and the hon. member for Maisonneuve-Rosemont (Mr. Joyal) during this debate? They can talk with reporters or in the corridors of parliament, in the parliament buildings, but what counts is their action here in the House of Commons. Why that silence here on the part of Quebec members? To defend the rights of PQ? No, they rather feared to lose the votes of the people of Quebec and you know that as well as I do. The proposal from the National Assembly to abolish the sales tax in traditional sectors like textiles, footwear, clothing and furniture was supported not only by the Parti Québécois but also by the whole National Assembly with the approval of every citizen in the province of Quebec.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, except for the Liberal members. I realize as well as you do that 35,000 of the 36,000 jobs lost in the secondary sector throughout Canada over the last 18 months were in the province of Quebec, particularly in traditional industries such as textiles and others. I wonder why you voted against such a proposal. Again I put this question to the present government and to hon. members from the province of Quebec: What level of government has jurisdiction over the sales tax? You, in the federal government? I think you know the answer as well as I do.

Let me answer. Because of their stupidity, because of their arrogance, because of their intransigence, nobody had done more than the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance to promote and help the cause of separatism in the province of Quebec. Because of your policy, it is surely an example of several of your measures of confrontation with the provinces; it is not the first time you have locked horns with the province of Quebec and with the other provinces. Because of your policy of confrontation in the present debate, a policy which has been going on for years, nobody has done more than you to help the cause of separatism in the province of Quebec.

● (1712)

[*English*]

Of the 270,000 jobs, Mr. Speaker, in the traditional areas of textiles, furniture, clothing, and shoes, 130,000 of them are found outside the province of Quebec. Leaders in all these