

Supply

that does not have a comparable moral authority and does not have to account for its actions.

[*English*]

The motion therefore seeks to undermine the principle underlying our system of elections and responsible government. It ignores the fact that the measures which they oppose were part of the election platform of the government in 1988, and that this government won re-election on the basis of that platform.

I stand in favour of the elected House and its historic rights. I stand in favour of the government elected by the people of Canada. I stand in favour of the economic policy presented to the people in two successive general elections and approved by them.

[*Translation*]

On the other hand, Madam Speaker, I must say in concluding that I object to what the non-elected members of the upper House have been doing and to the role they have given themselves. They should never have taken on such a role, which they had never sought to play until these past few years. I object to them claiming a moral authority equivalent to that of this House. Finally, I oppose this motion whose purpose is to legitimize their actions and alter the very nature of our system of government.

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Madam Speaker, in principle, we must always take seriously the resolutions that are presented and debated in this House. With this in mind, I would like to discuss the resolution proposed by the hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca. Since it is very short, I would like to start by reading it:

That a message be sent to the Senate reminding the Senate that it has the constitutional right and the power to defeat any bill coming from the House of Commons.

But, Madam Speaker, with all due respect for the Order Paper and resolutions, I stress that this resolution is not to be taken seriously, as I believe our New Democratic colleague himself admitted.

[*English*]

This resolution is a piece of mischief which is designed as a matter of NDP strategy to make it look as if the Official Opposition, of which I am very proud to be a member, is in favour of the free trade agreement and the goods and services tax.

You have to go a long way to try to make an argument like that. I want to suggest that the resolution that has been put before us just does not do it. It is not a resolution that can be taken seriously in any sense of the word.

It is ironic that a joke should be put on the Order Paper of the House of Commons at a time when there are so many serious things to discuss about the Senate and about the relationship between the Senate and the House of Commons.

We are sitting in this House doing our work, knowing that the more momentous events of today for the future of our country are taking place across the street. They are in the hands of the duly elected representatives of the legislatures of the provinces of our country, and of our national government, who is not a Liberal but a Progressive Conservative, who are working across the street to try to find a solution to the constitutional impasse that faces us. That is where the important things are happening today.

But if there is going to be light at the end of the tunnel, it is bizarre and ridiculous, and I am not going to put it any higher than that, for the New Democratic Party to take today to tell us that the Senate should be abolished and to remind senators that they have the constitutional right and power to defeat any bill coming from the House of Commons. What does that have to do with anything?

What I want to reflect on today in these brief remarks is what we should be saying about the Senate, what we should be asking about the Senate. Starting from a very simple first principle—

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member. However, I recognized him on question or comments.

Mr. Kaplan: I am sorry, Madam Speaker, I thought I had the floor.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I think there was someone rising on questions or comments. I should recognize him and then I will come back to the hon. member for York Centre.

The hon. member for Edmonton East.

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Madam Speaker, I must admit that hearing the hon. member launch into his