Government Orders

change. Therefore, it seems to me highly appropriate that an examination of that process, in light of its failure recently, should be made—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rocheleau: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I regret having to interrupt the minister, but the hon. member for Hull–Aylmer is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Rocheleau: We have been called to maintain a quorum in the House, Mr. Speaker. I notice that the government members are not present. Is that committee important or not? Could you please check if we have a quorum?

And the count having been taken:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I see that we have a quorum. The hon. Minister of Justice still has the floor.

[*English*]

Ms. Campbell (Vancouver Centre): Mr. Speaker, I simply wanted to conclude by saying that given the role of Parliament in constitutional amendment according to the current provisions of the Constitution, that it is highly appropriate that the Parliament of Canada take the leadership in trying to determine a process that would respond to the concerns that have been raised by the people of Canada. Parliament must try to develop proposals that hopefully can gain the broader support of the other participants in constitutional amendment in this country and therefore, make the change of the Constitution in Canada and the development of the constitutional process something in which all Canadians can take pride and feel their involvement in.

I would, Mr. Speaker, on that note, urge the support of all members of this House of the motion before them and their support for the initiation of what I think is going to be one of the most important processes that any member of this Parliament could engage in in the course of a political career, a process that is absolutely essential to the preservation of Canada's future as a united and prosperous country.

● (1540)

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Justice. I was one of the members last spring who spent a lot of time on the special committee of the House looking at the Meech Lake Accord. Our caucus and other caucuses as well spent a lot of time looking at the recommendations we made under the very able chairmanship of the hon. member for Sherbrooke. Unfortunately, the day after those recommendations were made, they were put aside by the powers that be in the government.

What I want to know from the Minister of Justice is, what guarantee can she give us at this time, once this committee is struck, that the government will pay attention to recommendations that that committee may make? We had a unanimous report of the House of Commons by members of all three parties, and I think we had a consensus of what Canadians wanted in terms of the Meech Lake Accord, yet, that report was ignored by the government. What assurance do we have from the Minister of Justice that come next summer, if once again we have a committee report that is unanimous and reflects what people in this country are saying, that report is not going to be ignored?

Ms. Campbell (Vancouver Centre): Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is correct to say that the work done by that committee was ignored by the government.

Mr. Lapierre: It was worthless.

Ms. Campbell (Vancouver Centre): I do not think it was worthless at all. In fact, I think it was an extraordinarily important exercise and I can congratulate everyone who was involved in it.

The problem at that time was that we were engaged in the process of constitutional change under the rules that came to us with patriation in 1982, which was at the denouement of a time frame that was determinative of the ability of the will of the First Ministers who had originally signed on to bring the agreement into force. That was hardly the ideal kind of circumstance into which to examine and evaluate the broader question of constitutional reform and how it might be brought into place. It was also, of course, not the case that the subject matter which the committee dealt with was the broad process. It was an attempt to try to see if in the context of