

*Government Orders*

travel across Canada? Would that money not be put to a better use or spent more wisely if it were to go for job creation, for example, or for a family policy?

As for the Reform Party, it would like to see a decrease in the number of seats in the House of Commons. The day after the referendum, their wish will be fulfilled. The Liberal government claims that this country needs a readjustment of electoral boundaries. The day after the referendum, their wish will be fulfilled too. In a few months from now, both the Reformers and the Liberals will get satisfaction. After the referendum that we are going to win, do not forget.

• (1535)

As a result, there will be fewer members sitting in this House and Canada will really need a readjustment of electoral boundaries, since Quebec will be sovereign and will no longer be part of a country that, historically—and I dealt with the historical background before question period—has not wanted it. I stated the relevant facts earlier.

[*English*]

**Mr. Harold Culbert (Carleton—Charlotte, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened very closely to the comments made by the hon. member and his proposition for 25 per cent of the members of this great House.

I wonder if he is seriously looking at the possibility of forgetting the proposal for separation and instead having a future as part of this great country of Canada. There is no question in my mind that Quebec complements and plays a very important role in the make-up of this whole country.

Is the member now suggesting that the referendum should be put on the back burner and that in the future Quebec should continue to be part of this nation and this House of Commons? Is that why he is putting forward this proposal of 25 per cent? If that is the case, I think it is wonderful the hon. member is prepared to come forward with that. It suggests to me that he and other Bloc members are changing their minds and now realize what a privilege it is to be part of this great country.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Fillion:** Mr. Speaker, historical facts from a more recent past will give us the answer to that question.

In 1965, the War Measures Act was proclaimed in Quebec. In the middle of the night, the government of Canada invoked the act. The army, used certain pretexts, supposedly to stop a separatist movement. Five hundred people were arrested without warrant. That is the first fact. The second one is even more recent. It happened in 1981, when the premiers of Canada, once again in the middle of the night, in Quebec's absence, went

against what they had signed and accepted the unilateral patriation of the Constitution.

I could also remind the hon. members of the very recent Meech Lake accord in 1987. Everybody knows that one member of this House prevented his legislature from discussing the Meech Lake accord, with the result that everything that had been provided for in that accord was rejected. That member now sits on the government benches.

We could also recall the Charlottetown round of discussions and the way it all ended. It is too bad, but Quebecers will not forget these facts. Bloc Quebecois members will not abandon their option, which is to pave the way to Quebec's sovereignty. Through our efforts here, we will reach that goal.

The only thing we are asking for now, because we are still in this federation, is the preservation of our rights. It is that simple. When Quebecers make a decision on Quebec sovereignty, you will do as you please. When that moment comes, both founding nations will gain something, in my opinion.

• (1540)

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, as I was listening to my colleague's speech, I remembered the mandate we received from the electorate, which is to defend the interests of Quebecers and at the same time to promote sovereignty.

Would he not agree that we have before us a very clear opportunity to fulfil both objectives? By rejecting the amendment which aims to maintain at 25 per cent the representation of Quebec in the House of Commons, the government shows that the Constitution cannot possibly be renewed. The government has not even given us this basic right.

By negating our status as a people, as one of the founding nations of this country, is it not the federal government, and particularly the Liberal members who voted against this amendment or simply abstained from voting, who will be blamed for not protecting the interests of Quebec? Will they not bear the brunt of this decision by the present government, a decision which is in keeping with the thinking of previous governments as well as with the logic of the unilateral patriation of the Constitution in 1982? Is the member not more comfortable with his position than Liberal members in general can be?

**Mr. Fillion:** Mr. Speaker, the comment made by my colleague allows me to demonstrate that despite the past hundred years, the people of Quebec have matured and are not about to gamble with their future. They will make a decision based on events they have witnessed throughout history.

The people of Quebec have reached a point where they will have to make a decision. Of course, that decision will be to hand the government of Quebec all political and economic powers to allow Quebec to govern itself without having to constantly wait