

country are now quite clearly questioning the value of proceeding with this general legislative framework, given the current economic conditions within the country? Has he considered whether there would be general agreement that conditions are quite different today from those which existed in August of 1982 when the Government first introduced its program and that it might be useful for the Government to postpone its headlong dash toward approval of this legislation in order to analyse the economic changes that have taken place, the social effects of those changes and to review the new opinions that are being expressed by many people, including the chairman of the six and five committee, the presidents of a number of the larger financial institutions and the spiritual leaders of the country?

In light of those fairly dramatic shifts, has he considered whether it might not be advisable to draw back and review the over-all situation to determine whether this kind of legislation is necessary and appropriate?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maltais: Mr. Speaker, if you are putting the question to me, I would say that I think we must maintain the six and five policy until the rate of inflation is down to 1 or 2 per cent.

Mr. Veillette: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): The Chair is experiencing a minor difficulty.

[*English*]

There are several Hon. Members rising to continue this exchange. One Hon. Member has risen to indicate that he thinks we should perhaps revert to debate on Bill C-133. Nonetheless, the Chair is obliged to recognize Hon. Members who rise on a point of order and I will do so. However, the implication is that there may not be unanimous consent to continue this kind of exchange.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Veillette: Mr. Speaker, I simply want to point out to you that the thrust of the debate has shifted completely. The Hon. Member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) had the floor a few minutes ago and we as Members of the Opposition were supposed to direct questions to him, but now it is our colleague the Hon. Member for Manicouagan (Mr. Maltais) who is fielding questions. Mr. Speaker, I can see that the Hon. Member for Joliette was afraid to face questions from the Quebec Member. He left his seat after the second one to avoid further questions from a Quebec Member. Being unable to answer, he left the House.

[*English*]

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think we are beginning to see the offshoot from the reforms that were instituted. Although the specific reform only calls for a question period of limited duration, ten minutes, after speeches on second and third reading, the thought has opened up that a debate with respect to posing questions at Report Stage is just as relevant sometimes as a

debate in terms of set speeches. I am inclined to agree that this is the case.

I think that the give-and-take has been quite healthy so far, just as Statements by Members have indicated that, despite the labels that might be put on some Members of Parliament, some do have a sense of independence and are deeply concerned about issues that are raised by Ministers from time to time.

You will recall that a Liberal Member questioned the statement by the Minister of State responsible for the status of women (Mrs. Erola) on income tax deductions. I think that this is quite a healthy development. I would not want to see that abandoned merely because it has taken a new twist this morning.

On the other hand, I can understand that the Member for Ottawa-Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) is anxious because he has an amendment which he would like to see reached at some point. Incidentally, I support that amendment and I would like to have it reached at some point.

I would not want to be seen as opposing unanimous consent for the continuation of this healthy exercise. If I were asked for unanimous consent, I would say yes. However, I think we have embarked on a new means of debate in the House and I want to commend you, Mr. Speaker, for your understanding of the new feeling in the House in terms of debate in the House. I hope that this precedent is one that will not be forgotten because it extends to the report stage at least the spirit of the changes with respect to the second and third reading. I think it is a very healthy exchange indeed and it ought not to be forgotten by Members of the House.

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would point out a fact that is confusing at this time. As the Hon. Member for Champlain (Mr. Veillette) said, it was the Hon. Member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) who was supposed to reply to questions. He made the speech. He was there to reply to a question and he ran away from the House. After that, the questions were asked of an Hon. Member on our side. I would like to point that out to the Hon. Member, as we would like to have the privilege of asking questions. Now we have the Hon. Member for Manicouagan (Mr. Maltais), who took questions from anyone, and he has done it in a superb way.

• (1220)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chrétien: But, on the other hand—

[*Translation*]

—the Member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) got scared and left when we began asking questions which could have been embarrassing. I hope Members opposite will not rush out of the House every time Liberal Members will rise to put questions to them. It is a good example, and thanks to the Opposition this incident did prove—and I am very proud of that—that a young Member such as the Member for Manicouagan