

It is not advisable to deprive constituents of a representative for a period of time. This is an elementary democratic principle.

Second, since we shall soon be celebrating our centennial, and in a year as historic as 1967, it is essential that the voice of all parts of Canada, without exception, be heard throughout the country, for celebrations on such a large scale.

Third, the new electoral map which is to be in force in the next general elections will result, under the proposed draft, in the elimination of the constituency of Nicolet-Yamaska and the absorption of the area by other ridings.

In such circumstances, what candidate could be interested in being elected merely for a few months, say for one year, if the by-election were put off to a later date and then to face another general election shortly after? Such a candidate would be elected to represent for a short time a riding doomed to oblivion. If the election were held within a few months, then a candidate could be interested in being elected from a period of three years.

Fourth, the constituency of Nicolet-Yamaska is French speaking and has always been represented as such in the House of Commons.

In the crucial times our country may have to face in the years to come, French speaking Canadians will need everybody at all times.

It is unfortunate to note that able men from the province of Quebec find provincial politics more attractive than federal politics.

That is an alarming tendency which must be countered, as well as the overbidding by nationalists which will take place during the provincial elections in Quebec. This is a tendency which must be reversed.

Instead of always thundering against the federal government, the leaders of political parties in Quebec should recognize the superiority and the policy of greatness of the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson), who is making constant efforts to promote racial equality in Canada. They should stop decrying the federal government and recognize its vital importance.

In conclusion, I shall castigate the Leader of the Opposition and the Conservative party for not having retained in their ranks such men as Léon Balcer, Rémi Paul and Clément Vincent, through fanaticism and lack of adaptation to the Quebec reality. French Canadians leave the Conservative party; the

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departure of Clément Vincent was a repudiation of his party.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I say that it is urgent to hold a by-election in Nicolet-Yamaska, because the government, which now has 131 members, would then have 132 and would come a step closer to a majority. I predict we will have a majority government before the end of our term of office and I hope there will not be any general elections before 1970.

Mr. P.-E. Trudeau (Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the government easily understands the urgency mentioned by the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Choquette) to hold a by-election in the riding of Nicolet-Yamaska.

The government would, of course, be tempted to call that election as soon as possible and for the very reasons given by the hon. member.

However, the government must necessarily hesitate to take any hasty action and must act with its usual coolness, in the spirit of fairness which must guide the calling of an election.

The government knows that it will be relatively easy for the electors of the riding of Nicolet-Yamaska to find willing candidates.

We, on this side of the house will be happy to welcome the successful candidate after that election. But, in all fairness, we must realize that on the opposition side, it might not be so easy to find a candidate willing to run.

• (10:20 p.m.)

The people must be given time to get used to the idea of having to choose a candidate from one of the parties of the opposition. With a view to balancing, on the one hand, a desire to welcome a new member on the government side and, on the other hand, a desire to be fair in allowing the opposition to prepare itself for this eventuality, we must not rush into elections.

But the hon. member and the voters can rest assured that the government is considering the matter with interest, that it intends to call elections as soon as possible and when indicated, that it intends to win them.

Mr. Paul Langlois (Chicoutimi): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rinfret): Order.

Mr. Langlois (Chicoutimi): I rise on a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker.