

Government Orders

This statement does not state the government will resign, but only in the event it resigns.

I cannot emphasize strongly enough the importance of the decision you are about to make in the next six weeks. You are being called on to decide who would form the Government of Canada in the event the Liberals resigned.

If you decide Canadians are best served by a party whose stated objective, which it has demonstrated in the last two years consistently, is to break the country into two pieces, you would err greatly.

We receive a great deal of mail. I receive mail from my constituents in Elk Island and from other people right across the country. The Speaker needs to be informed that there are Canadians right across the country who have written to Reform MPs, me included, in near exasperation, asking when we will do something.

We are helpless in the sense, as has been pointed out, that we are the third party by the ranking of numbers. A number of petitions by electors of Canada have been presented asking the House to name a loyal party to Canada the official opposition. This is of greatest importance.

I have received letters from and have had personal appointments with people who said they are so distressed but feel so helpless. They ask: "What can we do? We have a group in Canada that wants to tear the country apart and we cannot even deal with them in the House of Commons".

This is a very serious problem. I urge you, Mr. Speaker, to do the right thing. I appreciate the tremendous responsibility you bear at this time.

• (1120)

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, some question has arisen in the House on the matter of 53 Bloc members versus 52 Reform members, although I do not believe that is the entire consideration placed before you by our House leader.

The question arises whether the current Leader of the Opposition is deemed to have resigned from his seat in the House considering the issue of conflict of interest by an individual who has verbally given notice to lead a province and a party dedicated to separating from Canada.

The issues that individual is now dealing with are provincial in nature and not explicitly in the interests of the federation. Mr. Speaker, I therefore believe there are 52 members in both parties and that you should look at the issue of whether the Leader of Opposition is a member of the House at this point.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a few brief comments.

I could tell you that if the Bloc had finished third in the 1993 election, we would have had enough pride not to beg for the job of official opposition. I think that it is a matter of numbers, as the Bloc parliamentary leader pointed out.

I find it hard to understand the third party, Reform. Yesterday, they were calling for the Prime Minister's dismissal; today, they want to become the second party with fewer members. They live in a different world.

As the holiday season gets under way, there may be too many people in that party who still believe in Santa Claus.

[English]

The Speaker: I think that is one round. I was given notice of this point of order and I wanted to hear it.

At this moment there is no decision for me to make, nor would I make one now.

[Translation]

I will consider the statements that were made by all our colleagues here in this House, I want some time to reflect.

As you know, there may be changes in the number of members sitting in this House. These changes may occur in the coming weeks.

[English]

You have asked me as your Speaker to reflect on a point of order that was raised. I have now received information from you, my colleagues. I intend at this time to take the information, gather information of my own, reflect on what has been asked of me and if it is necessary, when it is necessary, I will return to the House with a decision.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

FINANCE

INTERIM REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

That this House take note of the Interim Report of the Standing Committee on Finance pursuant to Standing Order 83.1, presented to the House on December 12, 1995.

• (1125)

Mr. David Walker (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just over a year ago I was privileged to lead off the last take note debate on the possible measures for the 1995 budget. Today it is a pleasure to replay that role for the 1996 budget. It allows me to renew the heartfelt challenge to all hon. members of the House.