

*Government Orders*

I cannot understand why the hon. member would try to give that impression to his constituents. Perhaps we might wish to have a recall of the hon. member's ability to remember all of the facts and all of the things that have gone on in this House.

The question I have for the hon. member is the following. Does the hon. member not think it appropriate that the people of Prince Edward Island, who over 130 years ago decided that they would become a part of Confederation, have now determined through the most democratic way, namely a referendum, that they wish to amend those terms of reference which they consummated over 130 years ago? Is the hon. member saying to Canada's smallest province, to that group of individuals, that they no longer have that right as other Canadians in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and across this country have that right?

• (1305)

Is the hon. member suggesting in a code that because one comes from a small province, because one comes from a small population base, one does not enjoy the rights that other provinces have? Is that not what the hon. member is suggesting?

**Mr. Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, I was moved. I do not know what it is that the minister seems to get so apoplectic about every time I speak. This is the second time he has become so vociferous in his attack on me. I am not exactly sure why.

If I could address the points he raised I will go through them and try to remember them all. He said that I should not use selective memory in my remarks concerning last year's discussions but that I should think back to the extensive discussions.

What I was trying to emphasize during my presentation was that I have not forgotten the extensive consultations of last year. I have not forgotten that other members of the House, including every other party but—not the Bloc perhaps—the Reform Party of Canada were in favour of the Charlottetown accord. The Reform Party of Canada was in tune enough with the Canadian people to know they had rejected it wholeheartedly.

I was not dissociating myself from that discussion. Of course, I remember that and so should the hon. minister. Of course we want all discussions to be out in the open. Of course we want things to be decided through a referendum. When it comes to recall, if the minister thinks I am nervous of being recalled I invite him and his government to bring forward recall legislation at the earliest possible moment and we will put it to the test. It will not happen here.

It will happen first of all in Markham. I am convinced of that. As a matter of fact I expect thousands of people to come out to the rally tonight to determine that. If the minister wants to bring

that kind of legislation forward, he will have widespread support on this side of the House. I am starting to get a little wound up myself but I mentioned it clearly if the minister was listening to my speech.

I am not opposed to the idea of a bridge. The bridge may be a wonderful idea but to cherry pick your way through the constitutional orchard picking a cherry here, a cherry there, with the government deciding what it wants to do even if it has no support among the Canadian people at large. If there is going to be constitutional change the people want to ratify it themselves. They proved that during the Charlottetown accord. They will not accept anything less. If the government wants to check on the pulse of the Canadian people, do not be afraid to go to a referendum. The people will give it the answers it requires. They may well approve this change. I hope they do but the process must remain, involving all Canadians. If it does not it has no support from the Reform Party. I believe it has no support among the Canadian people.

**Mr. Dingwall:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has a selective memory. He should realize and understand that to suggest this is cherry picking with regard to constitutional reform is utterly wrong.

The Government of Canada, the Government of Prince Edward Island as well as the Government of New Brunswick signed a tripartite agreement. In order to consummate the agreement they duly signed after appropriate consultations with their constituents. After a referendum in the province of Prince Edward Island, the Federal Court of Canada stated it was necessary for that document to have full legal effect not only for the short term but for the long term to change constitutionally the terms of reference affecting the province of Prince Edward Island and the Government of Canada.

It is quite one thing to stand in one's place and accuse the government of the day of cherry picking on constitutional reform when it is the exact opposite. The court is saying clearly and unequivocally, if you wish to give long-term legal effect to a binding agreement duly entered into in good faith by three separate parties, you should and must make a change in terms of the constitutional reference. That is the rationale.

• (1310)

I am surprised that the hon. member, who is quite adept on his feet, would not be cognizant of that important fact. That is why today in this legislature, as some time ago in the legislature of P.E.I., this constitutional amendment had to be put forward in order to give legal and binding effect to an agreement duly entered into by three different provinces and the Government of Canada.