

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Prud'homme:** Mr. Speaker, that was a good exchange, true parliamentarians talking to each other. It is not political. It is basically important for me, absolutely important. Reflecting on his speech, I would like to ask him to comment on a question that is really troubling me as a federalist.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** I will recognize the hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead as the next speaker. Does the hon. member for Saint-Denis have unanimous consent to ask the hon. member for Don Valley West a short question?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Prud'homme:** I graciously thank the House.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member knows I am a federalist. What federalism means essentially is that Canada is not a unitary country, it is a federation made up of majorities and minorities.

I do not mean to object to the right of a government to hold a referendum. What concerns me is this: In its wisdom, does the government think it would be right to hold a referendum to ask the Canadian people to decide? I acknowledge that. But what would happen if by chance an overwhelming majority, having English as its official language, decides one thing, while as we have seen before another majority, from my province of course, decides just the opposite? How do we solve this dilemma in a federal system?

**Mr. Bosley:** My hon. colleague knows full well that a referendum will not solve this issue. I can see he stands by his principles when he asks this question.

[*English*]

I do not think a referendum is going to solve the problem he raises. It becomes necessary if the result is divisive. If the result of a consultation is divisive it will be necessary for those of us in this place who must ultimately make the final vote to reflect upon what that referendum will have told us if it achieves the result he describes.

In principle if you ask me the question: Because the anglophone part of this country accepts constitutional

amendments that are not accepted among the majority of francophone parts of this country in the example my hon. friend poses, is it up to me to be reflective of the duality of this nation and say we must therefore not pass those amendment? Yes it is, in my view.

That does not make it wrong to try to use the methodology of a referendum, national, local, or regional it seems to me anymore, to ask folks do you accept this notion? Eventually I say to them it seems to me it is logical that that step will become even more complete. It will no longer be in the terms of the technical language, a plebiscite. It will become eventually I suspect, in Constitution-making, true referendums. We will eventually be doing what the Danes did yesterday about the union in Europe. We will eventually be saying that in some form or other, the people of this country will have to make the final decisions about adoption of rules and that if they are rejected on a regional basis, they will have to be rejected on a national basis. It seems to me that is where this logically goes which is the only way that I can see in law to overcome the member's concern.

• (1910)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. François Gérin (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for this opportunity to say a word on this very important issue for the future of Quebec, the future of English Canada and the dismantling of the country.

Mr. Speaker, you are the voice of wisdom and I would like to remind you that we are now in the process of examining the second of 64 amendments to this bill, only the second one. Since there is approximately 20 minutes left in this debate, it is obvious that we will not have time to discuss the other 62 amendments.

Mr. Speaker, because the government decided to resort to a gag order we will have properly examined two amendments out of 64. Imagine that one of those—and I am going to make all Canadians laugh—

**An hon. member:** Or cry.

**Mr. Gérin:** I would like to make them laugh rather than cry.