

Private Members' Business

members' sexual orientation. They are saying no to full legal recognition of same sex couples.

Motion No. 264 is asking for our opinion as MPs on the issue. Members of Parliament are charged with the duty of representing their constituents and reflecting the will of Canadians in legislation. Canadians have clearly stated their opinion in the matter and I certainly intend to respect it.

We must also be realistic about the number of people the motion and the changes it could bring into being will affect. Often the figure of 10 per cent is cited as if to create the impression of a large invisible minority clamouring for rights. However, numerous studies have placed the percentage of homosexuals within Canada at between 1 per cent and 3 per cent. According to Professor Edmund Bloedow of Carleton University, fewer than 5 per cent of these individuals are in some form of permanent or committed relationship. Sociologists Alan Bell and Martin Weinberg, in their book *Homosexualities*, assert that a mere 1 per cent of people within the homosexual community are committed to a single lifetime partner.

I therefore question the necessity and urgency of debating the principle of same sex couple recognition. The hon. member has shared with the House the normality of same sex couples and how they are virtually identical to opposite sex couples. However, academics have gone on record to argue that committed same sex couples are more the exception than the norm by far within the homosexual community.

Before the House even considers making the kinds of changes advocated by the hon. member, we as members of Parliament have to see proof that committed relationships are the ideal majority preference, not the abnormality in the homosexual context.

To grant the sort of recognition the hon. member is seeking he would have the House use hundreds of hours of precious time, changing every piece of legislation mentioning the word couple and spending millions upon millions of dollars in legal fees, additional payouts, and supplemental benefits. The end result of the motion, when all is said and done, would be either higher taxes, increased debt, or reduced funding for programs supporting the traditional family. These are results Canadians do not support.

Canada has little to gain and much to lose with the passage of the motion. When the matter comes to a vote I intend to heed the wishes of my fellow citizens and my constituents and vote against Motion No. 264 as it now stands.

[Translation]

Mr. Ménard: Mr. Speaker, I believe there is a tradition in this House allowing the sponsor to close the debate. If I may I would therefore request the consent of the House to make use of that entitlement, two minutes more.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Since the period of debate is over, the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve is requesting the unanimous consent of the House to conclude the debate, for a maximum duration of two minutes. Is there unanimous consent?

[English]

Is there unanimous consent for the hon. member to close the debate?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

• (1145)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): There is no consent. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Call in the members.

• (1200)

[Translation]

Before the taking of the vote:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): As is the practice, the recorded vote will be taken row by row, beginning with the mover. I will then ask the other members supporting the motion on the same side of the House as the mover to kindly rise. Next, the votes of those supporting the motion on the opposite side of the House will be recorded. The votes of those opposing the motion will be recorded in the same order.

(Division No. 331)

YEAS

Members

Anawak
Bakopanos
Bélanger
Bellehumeur
Bouchard
Caccia
Caron
Clancy
Copps

Bachand
Barnes
Bélisle
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Brien
Campbell
Catterall
Cohen
Crête