

constantly; it is transformed by decisions made by both federal and provincial governments.

• (1735)

Over the years, the Government of Quebec has obtained a series of powers enabling it to take on full responsibility for areas under its jurisdiction, and in the past, legislative agreements were often used to give Quebec responsibilities which the other provinces did not have. My point is that the reference to rigid federalism is entirely inaccurate, and I think it is unworthy of the Leader of the Opposition, who favours a sound and structured debate, to say that the federalism we want is status quo federalism.

Finally, let me say that when the Leader of the Opposition starts speaking on behalf of Quebec, he is somewhat exaggerating his mandate and his role. He does not speak for Quebec. He may speak for Quebecers but he does not speak for Quebec.

Just now, he was saying that fifty members of the Bloc quebécois were elected because there was a political and economic crisis and it was therefore the Bloc's mission to try and deal with the recession and later on to deal with the political crisis through sovereignty.

I think he should at least realize this: If he and his fifty or so members were elected because of the economic situation and the political situation, he will have to admit there are people in Quebec who voted for him because of the economic situation and who did not vote for him for his political option.

The votes he got, if what he said earlier is still true, came from people who were fed up with Tory mismanagement, wanted to get rid of the former Conservative government and voted for him instead of for us.

However, in the process they did not give him the power to speak up for sovereignty and Quebec's independence. They gave him a mandate to discuss economic questions.

**Mrs. Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata):** Incredible.

**Mr. Ouellet:** The hon. member may think that sounds incredible, but I would like to say, in concluding, that I realize the Leader of the Opposition has certain responsibilities in this House and that he must act accordingly. I admit that during his speech he spoke at length about economic issues, and I agree that when the Leader of the Opposition talks about the economy, when he talks about unemployment and when he talks about social measures, he is doing what he is supposed to do as the Leader of the Opposition, of what is referred to as Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

### *The Address*

However, when he switches to his role as a supporter of Quebec's independence, he is no longer playing his part as leader of the opposition in a Canadian parliamentary system, under our Canadian Constitution. When he supports secession for Quebec, he is going far beyond the normal role of a leader of the opposition, whose aspirations are to become prime minister of the legitimate government, not to become the head of an independent State.

• (1740)

I do not see how he will manage to reconcile these two roles. I know that he takes 100 per cent of the salary of the opposition leader as well as 100 per cent of all the benefits that go with the job. I can tell him that in his speech, today, he earned only 75 per cent of his salary.

In closing, I would like to say that the debate we must have with the Canadian population regarding the future of Quebec is a very important one. During the hearings of the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, we hardly touched on the problems. The Leader of the Opposition referred to a document dealing with duplication. I must remind him, as he knows for sure, that this document was not prepared by the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, it was submitted to it. It was discussed by the Commission, but not commissioned by it. It was commissioned by Mr. Claude Morin for some students and faculties of the school of public administration (ENAP) in Quebec. Clearly, this is not a document you can consider to be thorough.

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot):** Mr. Speaker, when I heard the Minister of Foreign Affairs a while ago comment at length the speech of my leader, the Leader of the Opposition, I thought I was in the twilight zone. It was as though the minister had never lived through the last 15 or 20 years in Quebec and in Canada. It was as though the member for Papineau—Saint-Michel and his leader had never participated in the night of the long knives or the Meech failure. I also was led to believe that the member for Papineau—Saint-Michel had never worked for the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, that he had not understood the overwhelming message of the men and women of Quebec who testified in front of that commission. It was as though the reply of September 24, 1991, that of Beaudoin-Dobbie and of Beaudoin-Edwards, the July 7th Agreement, as well as the Charlottetown Agreement, rejected with a massive majority by Quebecers, had never existed. In one word, I thought I was on another planet.

When I heard the member for Papineau—Saint-Michel question the legitimacy of the vote expressed by Quebecers and the legitimacy of the Bloc Québécois as the Official Opposition, that helped me understand how the member viewed democracy. If the existence of the Bloc Québécois has but one merit, Mr. Speaker, it is certainly that of having launched the debate on the future of Quebec and of Canada and that was our first objective.