

concerned, we must become more consistent and we must make Quebecers and the Quebec government realize this. Mr. Speaker, I would like to go on, to say that Mr. Lévesque has again started to talk about association, although the PQ convention made it clear that it was not interested in association. Mr. Lévesque told us: It is high time we got back to the association concept, because in civilized countries, in the industrialized world, association and sovereignty must go together. I think we should also realize that what counts for Quebecers is not that Mr. Lévesque, as premier or as leader of the PQ, enjoys playing with the hyphen, but that he can provide an argument that is clear enough for them to realize that he is deceiving them, every day of the week. If Mr. Lévesque is a separatist, if he wants to break up Canada, let him say so! As representatives of Quebec, we know that Quebecers are not interested in separation, that they are willing to take up the Canadian challenge, and that this challenge will benefit all Canadians and not only Quebecers. Perhaps the opposition should start realizing this.

Mr. Speaker, I also wish to say a few words about energy. When Mr. Parizeau decided to raise the provincial tax on gas by thirty cents a gallon,—my constituency lies outside of the major urban centres, the population density is very low and distances are enormous—how can businesses be expected to come and settle in my constituency when now not only distance, but cost, has become a deterrent. Mr. Speaker, that too is an example of counterstrategy by the Lévesque government, and it is these counterstrategies that are helping to weaken and destroy our industrial framework, especially in Quebec. I would also like to say a few words in particular about the problems now facing car dealers. In the past, it was said that the footwear industry had to be protected, and that the sales tax would be abolished.

The same minister, Mr. Parizeau, already told us that this method was ineffective. Six months later, however, he used this same approach to help shoe manufacturers and retailers. Through their association, the dealers have now asked Mr. Lévesque to consider removing the sales tax to help the automobile industry, but Mr. Parizeau replied that such action would help Ontario and that the dealers would therefore have to live with the present economic conditions. Because of this, more dealerships have to close down every day! Mr. Speaker, this is another example of a counterproductive economic strategy which is harming small businesses, with the complicity of the Quebec government.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would simply like to point out to the Quebec government that we, in the federal government, believe that of necessity Quebec should diversify its industrial structure as it now relies too much on industries as such as textile and clothing, and that it should also have high technology industries, increase its productivity in key sectors, such as the pulp and paper industry, and improve its infrastructures, not only in the area of transport, but also in communications,

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computer technology and research and development. In this regard, I wish to assure those who still want to work effectively to promote Quebec economy, whether in the Quebec government, in the National Assembly or in the rest of the province, that the federal government is willing to take every possible action to help Quebec to take its rightful place and its rightful share in the Canadian economy so that we can finally solve our economic problems among Canadians without being faced every day with the issue of separation, which some people always put forward to win their point.

I therefore believe, Mr. Speaker, that it was proper to say that we, of the federal government, can afford to help businesses by granting loans and by increasing the amounts of these loans, but that both levels of government must learn that the economy is their responsibility and that they should cooperate if they want to be successful in this regard. In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move, seconded by my colleague, the hon. member for Scarborough-Centre (Mr. Kelly):

That the motion be amended by deleting the words "to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs" and substituting the following therefor: "to a committee of the whole".

I hope that the House will support this amendment.

● (1640)

[*English*]

Mr. McDermid: Mr. Speaker, I rise on the point of order. I did not want to interrupt the hon. member for Mégantic-Compton-Stanstead (Mr. Tessier) during his remarks. All of us in the House understand the passion which Quebec members have for their province and their country; there is no question about it. But I would ask the hon. member to withdraw his remarks, if in fact he made them—the translation could be wrong—wherein he indicated that we on this side of the House were the real separatists. I do not think there is anyone like the right hon. gentleman who leads my party who has tried harder to bring Quebec into the constitutional agreement. I do not think this has been questioned anywhere. Hon. members opposite should take the time to read the editorial which appeared in *Le Devoir* this morning. I think it was very well laid out. I think it is a fallacy to accuse hon. members on this side of the House of being separatists or of promoting the separatist cause, and I ask the hon. member to withdraw those remarks.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Tessier: Mr. Speaker, if I had made such a statement, I would have no hesitation in withdrawing my comments. I would like to point out to the hon. member that we, the members from Quebec, often think some opposition members make Quebecers feel that too often they associate with people who are but separatists. I am not accusing them of being separatists, but I could say that we feel they are playing in the hands of the separatists, and as a Canadian, I greatly deplore this.