

I finally learned the name of my senator, and the reason for that appointment. When we look at the list of Quebec senators, the 21 left, most of whom live in Montreal, we find that one is an organizer for the Conservative Party, one is a fundraiser for the Liberal Party—I know him—another was a top adviser to the former premier of Quebec who just left office, yet another is an organizer for the Conservative Party, and another is a good Liberal, yes, and has been a Liberal MP for a long time. The letters P.C. are added to his name.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have a list of 21 senators and none of them is truly representative of Quebec.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I want to thank the hon. member for Frontenac for his co-operation and understanding.

Questions and comments. The hon. member for Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia has the floor.

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, there is something I do not understand. I am really confused. If the hon. member and his party want to leave Canada, why are they so interested suddenly in the future of Canada? If the member wants to destroy our country, what importance does all this have for him?

• (1800)

Why should he talk about the future of Canada if he has no interest in it?

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend my colleague in the Reform Party for asking his question totally in my language.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, Quebecers, every year, pay 24 per cent of all taxes to the federal government. As long as Quebecers are part of this country, we will defend their interests here.

The members across the way and those in the Reform Party are probably thinking: Why do so many Quebecers wish to leave the Canadian family? My hon. friend in the Reform Party is happy in the present regime, and so are his children. As for me, I am sad and unhappy to be part of Canada, and I wish Quebecers would finally wake up and decide to give their children who are listening to us on television a country to which they are entitled: Quebec.

We see senators who are defending the regions. But when I ask what senator represents my region, which is made up of three ridings, nobody knows. He never comes to the ridings of Frontenac, Lotbinière or even Bellechasse. There are three ridings in my region. But we never see our senator. He is a Conservative senator who was appointed by the preceding government.

Supply

I tell you this: we pay, so we have our say. The present Senate is just a bunch of patronage appointees, people who were appointed for services rendered. And we have no confidence that they will defend Quebec's interests.

[English]

Mr. Herb Grubel (Capilano—Howe Sound): Mr. Speaker, I would like raise a question about the role of a Senate in an ideal world. Most countries have found that the idea of a totally sovereign legislature in the form of a House like ours is not adequate in protecting the interest of the people as a whole.

What we have at the moment costing \$27 million a year is not the ideal kind of chamber that we see around the world. This was brought out by hon. members today and I agree. It is essentially a chamber which is serving the purpose of a sober second thought. We should not be too harsh on it because it has done a very good job.

For example, the amendments it has proposed recently to the bill on redistribution served a useful function. There was some partisanship which served the country in bringing out debate over the GST, over free trade. These served useful functions.

However, \$27 million a year may be a bit expensive. The role we should strive for is that the Senate take the other functions that we see in similar chambers around the world, namely the protection of regional minorities and for senators who have a longer election—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I regret, but it is very difficult for chair occupants when members choose to split their time, in fact speak for 10 minutes and only have five minutes for questions and comments.

I hesitate when there is only a minute left because I appreciate that all members want to make their point leading up to their questions. I would ask the member for Capilano—Howe Sound whether he wants to leave the comment as is or if he has a short question to add.

• (1805)

Mr. Grubel: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the time constraint. I am sorry if I went on a little long. I did not keep track of time.

With a reformed Senate, one which is modelled after successful upper chambers around the world, I wonder whether there is not a chance that the member who spoke so articulately against the present system might be willing to consider that a reformed Senate might be in the interest of all Canadians, in particular the people of Quebec.

[Translation]

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, back in 1968, Quebec Premier Daniel Johnson abolished the provincial equivalent of the Senate, the legislative council. Is Quebec worse off today because of the elimination of that council 26 years ago? Quite the contrary. The National Assembly in Quebec is much