

The half-leader of the official opposition—I am told he is two-thirds of it—understands full well and endorses the good old philosophy according to which in politics it is more profitable to support a respectable falsehood than an untested truth. We do not believe in such a thing. We know full well that as responsible administrators, we sometimes have to take decisions that could give rise to dissent or confrontation.

This happens quite often when municipal authorities must take an important and unpopular decision, for instance, when a city council decides to build water and sewer systems. Of course, there are arguments and discussions and a referendum is held, and then the matter is settled, and as far as I know, life goes on as before. The role of representatives, of public authorities, is precisely to express and to carry out within each period what is considered to be due justice in the collective consciousness.

● (1700)

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, we know full well that if all these people were telling the truth, 99 per cent of the population would fully agree. Of course, one could discuss ad infinitum about furnishings and decoration, about the colour of the walls or the best place for the sink and the toilet. One could also seek the advice of all the tenants who signed the lease and who are eagerly waiting to move into their new apartments. But in so doing, construction would be delayed indefinitely and one could never be sure to please future tenants moving in two, three, four or five years hence. So are we going to avoid or abstain from building for unfounded reasons? It is also ironical, and I would even say astonishing, Mr. Speaker, to find that the same persons who are dead set against our proposal, both in principle and in the name of the Canadian electorate, are showing such a lack of interest in their daily behaviour. Could it be that the store sign or the advertising do not truly reflect the contents?

**An hon. Member:** They do not know themselves!

**Mr. Tousignant:** Right, they do not know themselves. We have had to listen to a few inflammatory and racist speeches—

**An hon. Member:** Mostly that.

**Mr. Tousignant:** From some hopeless and diehard radicals with hoarse and sepulchral voices so befitting their party. As Lafontaine said, referring to the plague-stricken animals “of the tiger, of the bear nor of the other powers the least forgivable offenses”.

The mini-leader has himself delivered a lifeless and unconvincing mini-speech under the dull eyes of a few bystanders forced to listen to him because of their party convention that was to be held during that weekend right here in the nation's capital. But where have they gone all those who yelled, “Death to the donkey.” Yes, Mr. Speaker, as Jean de Lafontaine my favorite poet in college said, these people remind me of the

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plague-stricken animals. You will find here and there a somewhat learned wolf who will demonstrate thanks to his oratory talents that this damned animal, this bald and mangy animal from which all their evil stems should be devoured. Our sin, the Liberal sin is that we want Canadians to be proud of being Canadians. That is our cardinal sin and that is what we are being blamed for now. This sin is actually considered by the plague-stricken animals as an abominable crime.

Mr. Speaker, let us be objective, let us look more closely at the seriousness of our opponents. At the beginning of this debate the Progressive Conservatives told us they needed more time to debate this important issue and that consequently they would have several amendments to present. Yet up to this day, up to the last agreement between the parties, only one amendment had been submitted—

**An hon. Member:** And not receivable—

**Mr. Tousignant:** Not receivable as my colleague says and we have heard well over 80 speeches, yes, 80 speeches on only one amendment. Just imagine! At this rate, Mr. Speaker we will long be gone, we will all have retired by then and yet we will not have started the debate on the main issue. The worst part of it all is the fact that the mover of this amendment, the main spokesman for the Progressive Conservative party on constitutional matters, the member for Provencher (Mr. Epp) from Manitoba has decided that during these important discussions, he would travel to Africa and South America. Just imagine! How best to show the importance of this debate in the eyes of these people! I let Canadians be the judges of that, Mr. Speaker, and decide who is sincere in this House and who is faking—

**An hon. Member:** —and who is serious.

**Mr. Tousignant:** —and who is serious.

How can one take seriously those who, in front of TV cameras, shed crocodile tears when they do not even believe in what they advocate? We have been marking time long enough on this matter, Mr. Speaker. Everyone will agree that it is always with some apprehension that one sees the dentist's needle or knife, but what a relief when the bad tooth or the pain is gone!

It is the same with the constitutional issue. Let us act right now. Let us put an end to those endless discussions which are consuming us all. Let us give ourselves the tool, the key, the wrench to tune up our engine in order to avoid failures and needless delays. Often a new piece of equipment will cause much disruption and negative reactions among the people affected in a plant, for example. But after a while, those same people will swear by that new equipment. Likewise, our newly patriated constitution will enable us, with the agreement of the provinces and the people, to bring about the changes we deem necessary and advisable and to give ourselves a charter of rights designed to protect everything our fellow citizens hold