

*Government Orders*

But the truth is that they constantly avoid the real question, which is separation. They want to avoid a clear definition of their aim, which is separation, and they do not want people to know that they are separatists. It is a very clear question. I do not understand the problem with asking the question right now.

**Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to have such a large audience and to see all the members of the Bloc who are eager to hear my speech, which will lead them to vote in favour of Bill C-69. They are all here in front of me.

Let me begin with the member who has just taken us back to Confederation and talked to us about the representation in the House of Commons in 1867. One does not have to be a great historian to know that, in 1867—The member, who knows his history, knows perfectly well that the Union Act, 1840 and the British North America Act are not the same thing.

Anyway, at the time of Confederation in 1867, there were in fact three regions. There were, of course, 24 seats for what was then Upper Canada, 24 seats for Lower Canada, and 24 seats for the three maritime provinces, that is ten for New Brunswick, ten for Nova Scotia and four for Prince Edward Island.

We all know that Prince Edward Island chose not to enter Confederation at that time and joined a few years later. So, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia each had 12 seats; 12 and 12 are 24, right? Twenty-four for Quebec and 24 for Ontario. For a member to claim that Quebec had 50 per cent of the seats in 1867 is the opposite of the truth, as Sir Winston Churchill and his parliamentarians said so well.

Those are the facts. With all due respect, the hon. member opposite does not know what he is talking about. Twenty-four out of 72 is not 50 per cent. Our friend who wants to leave the room, no doubt on very urgent business, should know better.

**Mr. Benoît Tremblay (Rosemont, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I think there is some laxness in the negative turn of phrase used to avoid using unparliamentary language. There is a lot of laxness in the content of the hon. member's speech; I hope there will not be as much in his vocabulary.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I too heard language that came very close to being unparliamentary. I would ask all hon. members to respect the rules.

**Mr. Boudria:** I will go on, after being interrupted by a Bloc member. Another Bloc member claimed today in a speech, and again this was not what actually happened, that it was because of certain federalists here in Ottawa, and only because of them, he said, that the War Measures Act was invoked during the October crisis.

• (1715)

I have here some excerpts from a letter I would like to quote to relate certain facts: "Under the circumstances, on behalf of the Government of Quebec, I request that emergency powers be provided as soon as possible so that more effective steps may be taken. I request particularly that such powers encompass the authority to apprehend and keep in custody individuals who, the Attorney General of Quebec has valid reasons to believe, are determined to overthrow the government through violence and illegal means". And it goes on.

I read further on: "The chief of the Montreal Police has informed us that the means available to him are proving inadequate and that the assistance of higher levels of government has become essential for the protection of society", etc.

Of course, I was reading from a letter the Quebec government of the day wrote to the Canadian government at the request of the Montreal chief of police. I do not mean here to defend or criticize the War Measures Act, but I want to tell members opposite that when they talk about the War Measures Act, they should tell the whole story instead of hiding half the truth the way they so often do.

Earlier today, we heard members across the way say they reject this bill even if they unanimously endorsed it in committee. They changed their mind along the way because one of them saw fit to move this motion to ensure Quebec will never have less than 25 per cent of seats in the Commons. Those same members opposite keep whining, like one of them is doing now while I am speaking. They tend to forget that they opposed the Charlottetown accord that gave that kind of assurance.

**Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe):** It was rejected everywhere.

**Mr. Boudria:** It is not true. I am sorry but in French-speaking areas outside Quebec, in my own riding, 70 per cent of my constituents supported the accord. The hon. member across the way says it was rejected everywhere, but it is not true. Obviously, the accord did not pass, though. But when I hear Reform members demanding an elected Senate, something they rejected in the Charlottetown accord, and when I hear Bloc members demanding 25 per cent of the seats, something they refused in that same accord, I am entitled to question their sincerity.

[English]

Some people across the way are remembering the truth in a selective manner. They are indeed remembering the truth in ways that pleases them.

I for one am in favour of this bill. It is not to change the Constitution. It is nothing of the sort. It is just to modernize our electoral laws. Let us do it now. If we do not pass this bill, those same people across the way are going to accuse us in very short order that we did not proceed with the bill and redistribution could not take place on time.