

*Government Orders*

Party. I stand in support of the member for Chambly who speaks with conviction as a Quebecer for Quebec interests within this party and for a united Canada.

**Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East):** Mr. Speaker, you will permit some skepticism on our side. I was watching television about a month ago when the leader of the New Democratic Party said the Constitution was not a problem, the Constitution was not an issue, that what we should be looking at is strictly the economy. I am happy to see she now understands that the Constitution is very critical to the future of this country.

If in fact she speaks as the leader of the New Democratic Party, why is she afraid to speak before the Bélanger-Campeau Commission and to tell the people of Quebec exactly what her party thinks on this issue?

[*Translation*]

Why is she not prepared to go before the Bélanger-Campeau Commission and state her position on the Constitution instead of sending the member for Chambly. He is for sovereignty-association, but she is not. Why does she refuse to make a presentation?

[*English*]

**Ms. McLaughlin:** Mr. Speaker, I am accountable to my party. I am accountable to the people of Canada. I am not accountable to the Liberal opposition.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Ms. McLaughlin:** However, I will say that both in Quebec and outside of Quebec I have spoken about our party's constitutional policy. I will continue to do so.

**Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for the NDP says we touched a nerve. Indeed it does touch a nerve when the leader of her party claims that they are the people who are speaking for Canada. However, she does not have the courage to go into the province of Quebec to speak about the federalist position of her party before the Bélanger-Campeau commission, but she is prepared to send the member for Chambly who is clearly saying one thing in English and another thing in French. One of the criticisms we have had of the government over this debate has been that the Prime Minister and the government have said one thing to English Canadians and another thing to Canadians in the French language.

• (1240)

There is one party and one leader who are prepared to say the same thing in both languages. It is the Liberal Party and it is the Liberal leader who has the courage to go before the Bélanger-Campeau Commission and tell Quebecers and Canadians about his hopes and dreams for Canada.

[*Translation*]

I find incredible and insulting that the government leader and the leader of the New Democratic Party refuse to state their constitutional policy for Canada.

**Mr. Duhamel:** They do not have one. They are afraid!

**Ms. Copps:** Mr. Speaker, we are considering today a motion to establish a Special Joint Committee of the House to inquire and report upon the process for amending the Constitution, including alternatives to the present formula and other ways of changing it.

Mr. Speaker, certainly the amending formula is one of the contributing factors that lead to the Constitutional deadlock, but it is not the only one. The process itself was brought to a standstill because the Prime Minister refused to work as hard outside of Quebec as he did to sell the Meech Lake Accord to the people of Quebec. What he did is do a good job selling Meech Lake to Quebecers, but he did not say a thing about it outside of Quebec.

I know because I represent an anglophone riding outside of Quebec. Brian Mulroney and his gang did not come to Hamilton to explain what Meech Lake was about. Instead, they stressed upon the people of Quebec that to reject the Accord was to reject Quebec. Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I did not reject Meech Lake. Nor did I reject Quebec.

My constituents have no understanding of what the Meech Lake Accord was. Some of those who were against the Accord do not want the separation of Quebec. They want Quebec to remain within Canada. After the failure of Meech, I think that we will now come to realize, with the work of the Bélanger-Campeau Commission and the recognition of the people outside of Quebec, that the situation is serious. We have finally reached the point where Canada must welcome Quebec within the Canadian family.

**Mr. Lapierre:** Too late!