

Government Orders

become the issue and is not a measure of productivity. It happens after years of productivity here.

There is a serious lack of leadership. We need to get our leadership back into focus. We must become examples to young people and to other citizens.

Let us examine some of the great and wonderful benefits. I return to the point I made earlier about the President of the Treasury Board saying that we have been forced into it. He said that we should look after the interests of our families for the future.

If anybody in the House is looking after family members, it is some of our people. I look at one of my colleagues who has a young family at home. If there is anyone here whom I know personally who cares about his family, it is this man. He is saying: "I am opting out of the pension plan". The issue is that we have calculated the cost. We know the cost and have said that we want to pay the cost as all other Canadian citizens have to pay a cost to retire.

I commend my colleagues who have decided to opt out of this overly generous plan and who are prepared to put their reputations, their leadership and their imagination on the line. There is another vision for Canada, a vision of responsibility, a vision of leading the country into a moral position that says we will treat taxpayers' money as a public trust with the same jealousy and with the same concern as we have for our own.

[Translation]

Mr. André Caron (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to what the hon. member for Richelieu had to say. He expressed his surprise at the wording of Motion No. 4 which says that members who want to make an election concerning their pension will be able to receive the pension or make that election only if they are Canadian citizens.

I am astonished, surprised and disappointed to see this kind of proposal because, like the hon. member for Richelieu, I see this as an attack on the members Quebec sent to Ottawa, an attack on Bloc members. The message is that Bloc members are sovereignists who are trying to get Quebec to separate and should be punished by being deprived of their pensions.

When they were elected in October 1993, the Bloc members were well aware that their term in Ottawa would not be long enough to entitle them to a pension. However, I would like to point out two things about Motion No. 4. First, I think it is unfair to sovereignist members who work in Ottawa and represent their constituents. Sovereignist members from Quebec received a mandate from the people. They are proud to sit in the House of Commons and do the job they promised to do, which is to defend the interests of Quebec and promote Quebec's sovereignty.

• (1600)

Incidentally, this motion attacks not just Quebec sovereignists but any Quebecer sitting in the House of Commons who, after Quebec becomes sovereign, decides to give up his Canadian citizenship, because the motion says: "As long as that person is a Canadian citizen".

So are the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Labour, the President of the Privy Council and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, the members for Sherbrooke, Pierrefonds—Dollard, Verdun—Saint-Paul, Outremont, Gatineau—Labelle, and the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce who has been in this House for 30 years, are they all going to be forced to choose between their pension and their citizenship after Quebec becomes sovereign?

Are you going to tell the Prime Minister who, if I am not mistaken, has been a member of the House of Commons for 30 or 33 years and who has represented the people of Quebec to the best of his ability: "Mr. Prime Minister, if you do not give up your Canadian citizenship, you will be entitled to your pension, but otherwise, if you take out Quebec citizenship, you will give up the pension entitlements you had under Canadian law"?

I consider this motion unfair for the membership of the Bloc Québécois because it smells like punishment. It is also unfair for federalist members of Parliament from Quebec, who will be asked to choose between their pension and their citizenship.

It also makes a mockery of the whole Quebec sovereignty debate in which it has been made clear that Quebec would assume its responsibilities in the event of sovereignty. Quebec will not ask people living there to give up their citizenship or anything else in order to obtain Quebec citizenship. Quebec will not, for example, ask federal public servants entitled to a pension to give up their Canadian citizenship in order to receive a pension paid by Quebec, because Quebec has announced it will assume the responsibilities it inherits from the Government of Canada in the area of federal public service pensions.

I think that a motion like this one complicates matters ahead of time for the Quebec and Canadian negotiators who will be trying to reach an amicable agreement after Quebec achieves sovereignty.

I think it is a very bad thing and does not augur well for the future to have Parliament adopt this sort of motion. It is a disgraceful way to behave and it will hinder future negotiations.

I think we will need all our democratic and justice wits about us to ensure that the negotiations following sovereignty are conducted in the best possible manner. It is not acceptable for the Government of Canada to adopt a motion like this one, which