

*Government Orders*

one of my colleagues, who said yesterday that she had no qualms about accepting her paycheque and the benefits of being a member of Parliament, and neither do I. I consider that I work and that I do the job expected of me. If the voters in my riding consider this no longer to be the case at some point, I would encourage them strongly to replace me, rather than lower the salary and benefits of parliamentarians, thus probably reducing the calibre of those who stand for public office.

[English]

I take exception to something the member for Calgary said a little earlier today about members of the Bloc retiring and their MPs pension. I am paraphrasing his remarks when he said that if they lived in another country they should not receive their MPs pension. I for one hope the country never separates. I pray it does not. In the unlikely event that it would, the logic of the hon. member would be absolutely disastrous to my constituents.

I have people in my riding who work in Quebec and live in Ontario. Does that mean they would be denied the Quebec pension plan, their employers' pension plans and so on? We can see how stupid that kind of reasoning can be if applied. I dissociate myself as a staunch federalist from the comments of the hon. member. They are wrong and they further create and augment the kind of division which he and others say should not exist in the country. He is appealing to the lowest common denominator in trying to get his point across.

**An hon. member:** You are grasping at straws.

**Mr. Boudria:** I am not grasping at straws. The unity of the country is not straw. It is a strong principle. To try to run roughshod over the benefits of my constituents is not grasping at straws. It may be in the minds of some members across the way. We know what they stand for.

Before getting into the issue of MPs' pensions let me talk about the lack of understanding toward one another. Mr. Speaker has made a judgment on one incident and I will not refer to that one.

• (1045)

There is another incident that happened yesterday in which members across, in the same party, said something as follows.

[Translation]

They said the Liberal and the Bloc members were conniving in some sort of treason—that is what they said—because the three bills will be adopted by the House by June 23. In support of their remarks, they said that the reason was in order to celebrate the Saint-Jean-Baptiste holiday. First, as we know, the holiday falls on a Saturday, this year. Second, if it fell during the week,

the House would not sit that day. So, that is wrong. Third, and most important, as my hon. colleague for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine has just said, celebrating the Saint-Jean-Baptiste holiday is not treasonous.

The members opposite have no sense of our country's culture. They should learn about it. People in my riding celebrate the Saint-Jean-Baptiste holiday, and, this year, they will be celebrating in the village of Cheney. Thousands will be there, and they are not traitors. The members opposite who describe them as such are mistaken. They should apologize to the House and, more importantly, to all French speaking Canadians for having made such stupid remarks about our fellow citizens. This is what is important. Once again, the Reform Party members stooped as low as they could to support their remarks.

[English]

They are using the same kind of thing now in the MPs pension issue. The people in the third party across—it was them I was referring to, not to any other colleague—talk selectively about what they say is the unfair compensation MPs receive.

We had a member here making comments while he is receiving a lucrative pension from the federal government, claiming that he has a right to receive such a pension but that nobody else does, and saying that with a straight face.

Other hon. members have said that they would not refer to the MPs who were receiving some of these double dipping pensions. As they say in the province of my hon. colleague from Newfoundland, "What is good for Goose Bay is good for Gander". So I do not mind raising some of these things.

It has been said that the Deputy Prime Minister, were she to retire today—and not that she will, she will be an hon. member of this House for decades to come—would receive a pension. What is the difference then from the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, a Reform MP, who receives a pension as a former military officer? He has a right to receive it. That is not the point. Why does he think that nobody else does? What makes him that god-like creature he thinks he is? What about the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan, a general, who says that he can receive a pension but others should not were they to retire in the future?

What about the member for Kootenay West—Revelstoke, a former federal government employee? What about retired teachers across the way? What about retired MLAs who are receiving an MLA pension from a legislature across this country? They stand up in this House and say they are not going to get an MP pension. Do members know why? Because they are getting one from elsewhere already from the public purse. That is the truth.