

[Translation]

Mr. Guay (Lévis): Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit a brief question?

Mr. Rondeau: Yes, if it is a brief one.

Mr. Guay (Lévis): Mr. Speaker, if, as the hon. member said, the Prime Minister of Canada went to visit foreign countries, because his popularity was decreasing in Canada, I wonder whether he and his leader are not making trips to western Canada for the very reason that their own popularity is decreasing in Quebec—

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member is making a speech rather than asking a question.

• (4:20 p.m.)

[Translation]

Mr. Rondeau: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that the hon. member for Lévis rose. This will enable him to remain in the eyes of his constituents, which he dearly needs, for his interventions in this House have been few and far between.

I see no objection, Mr. Speaker, to the fact that our Prime Minister travels the country or that other members tour Canada to ascertain the problems facing us, for we, as parliamentarians, are here to run the country and pass legislation. Cross-country tours for informational purposes are therefore in order, but it is abnormal that one should spend 60 per cent of one's time abroad as has been the unfortunate case with the right hon. Prime Minister since 1968 who has been trying to solve the neighbours' problems instead of looking in his own backyard.

This conference is now a thing of the past and Britain continues to sell arms to South Africa. May I say in passing that the right hon. gentleman busted his political balloon during the conference since he supported the British position he disapproved prior to his departure for Singapore.

During his 25-day trip, in consultation with the experts who accompanied him, he has done some sort of a political somersault, for he has already proved indeed that he could practically walk on his head—

[English]

Mr. Deakon: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I should like to know what all this talk has to do with the organization bill. Is it on the subject, or not?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member is questioning the relevancy of the remarks of the hon. member who now has the floor. It seems to me the hon. member for Shefford is, generally speaking, within the relevancy of the debate. He has been speaking about the travels of the Prime Minister within the framework of the organization of government. In this debate so far, I think we have granted fairly wide latitude in the matter of relevance as long as the subject matter related generally to government organization.

Government Organization Act, 1970

[Translation]

Mr. Rondeau: Mr. Speaker, we are considering the organization of the government in general and when we talk about the Prime Minister's trips, I realize that it may hurt some members of this House. Be it as it may, this regards the organization of the government, because we are asked today to vote various amounts of money that were not provided for in the estimates, as a reward for some members on the government side and in order to keep some promises that our Prime Minister made.

In the meantime, our businessmen and Canadians in general are worrying, and rightly so, about the economic situation which is deteriorating day by day. The number of unemployed is increasing at an alarming rate.

The Prime Minister claims that unemployment is nonsense, and that those who speak of it are talking nonsense. The number of unemployed continues to increase at an extraordinary rate while our great traveller, the Prime Minister, turns political somersaults by day and performs—we noticed during his last trip—Asiatic dances during the erotic hours of night in Chinese discotheques.

Our Prime Minister seems concerned about the economic situation in Canada; yet he neglects to solve Canadian problems. His last trip enabled him to—

Mr. Prosper Boulanger (Mercier): Mr. Speaker,—

Mr. Rondeau: Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the hon. member for Mercier, who was promoted "whippet" a few days ago, to make the most of his qualities from time to time in the House—

Mr. Boulanger: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

I do not know, Mr. Speaker, whether the translation is getting to you correctly, but what the hon. member for Shefford is saying right now, is that 60 per cent of the time the Prime Minister is away from the House. That is not in order. He is telling falsehoods.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair has, I think, allowed throughout the speeches of all hon. members a latitude which I believe to be in order and in keeping with the very general nature of the bill before us, a measure dealing with government reorganization. I would hesitate at this stage to indicate that a narrower interpretation should be placed upon the rule of relevancy.

[Translation]

Mr. Rondeau: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will not hold it against the hon. member for Mercier. On the contrary, I congratulate him on his appointment as "whippet", and I hope the government will take into consideration the few interventions he makes in good faith, I believe, in the House.

Mr. Boulanger: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the hon. member a question?

Could he give me the definition of the term "whippet" if it is in his dictionary?