

Private Members' Business

I am proud of the bill I have put together because although society might accept a wide variety of living arrangements it should not be obligated to support every societal arrangement. It must allocate its precious resources to those tried and true social structures which have been common within Canadian society for centuries and are common across literally hundreds of cultures around the world.

The February issue of *U.S. News and World Report* details studies from the states showing that moms and dads together are the ideal parental form. Nothing else is as effective in cutting poverty and fighting crime, teenage pregnancies, suicide and mental illness. Even so, nuclear families continue to be discriminated against even in taxation within our own country. The time has come to expose this government sanctioned discrimination against nuclear families. That is why I hope when my bill does come up for a vote we will be able to deal with that properly.

In closing, I want the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve with whom I sat on the standing committee for human rights in the last session to know that I appreciate him and his work on the committee even though we might disagree on this issue. Although I state freely that I have moral reservations about the homosexual lifestyle, I have approached the issue purely on the pragmatic reasons I have outlined. Same sex benefits are not in the public interest.

[Translation]

Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in this debate on the motion put forward by my hon. colleague from Hochelaga—Maisonneuve:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should take the measures necessary for the legal recognition of same sex spouses.

Mr. Speaker, I would like first of all to commend the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve for having the courage to table in this House a motion that makes us see, in terms of human rights, what is really at stake here and, more importantly, where the members of this House, particularly our colleagues from the Reform Party as well as certain members of the Liberal majority, really stand on this issue.

Several of my colleagues, including the hon. member for Chicoutimi who spoke a moment ago, the hon. member for Jonquière who spoke during the first hour of debate and, of course, the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, addressed the merits of the question of recognizing the rights of same sex spouses, the need to take action and the economic impact of such a decision. I therefore have no intention of repeating what was said as these points were quite aptly made.

• (1130)

I would like to address what appears to be the main issue: Is this a debate on homosexuality or a debate on human rights?

It is true that we are used to hearing our colleagues from the Reform Party talk that way. One would think that Reform members have become all round right wing fundamentalists. We are used to this kind of language, but there is still a limit to what I can tolerate.

When it comes to despicable, shameful and downright unacceptable remarks, our Liberal colleague from Central Nova takes the cake. She was heard making such remarks more than once in this House; first, during the debate on Bill C-41 and again when she spoke on the motion put forward by my hon. colleague from Hochelaga—Maisonneuve. What she said was a disgrace—I repeat, a disgrace—for this House, the Liberal majority and democracy itself.

What is it that the member for Central Nova said and was applauded for by Reform members? In her remarks on Bill C-41, she said, and I quote: "Homosexuality is not natural; it is immoral and it is undermining the inherent rights and values of our Canadian families and it must not and should not be condoned".

And she added: "—a faction in our society which is undermining and destroying our Canadian values and Christian morality—We have the majority—I suppose she is referring to the heterosexual community here. We have a democracy. I am representing in my viewpoint the majority of Canadians".

If this is the kind of society and the kind of freedom that Canada has to offer, and if the member for Central Nova is, as she claimed, speaking on behalf of most Canadians, then it is urgent for us Quebecers to get out of this country.

We take exception to such comments. The debate in this House is on the motion tabled by my colleague, the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, and it has to do with human rights, not homosexuality. If there are members in this House who have doubts as to their own sexual orientation, they should go for some therapy. This is not the place for group therapy. As a democratic institution, Parliament must ensure that democratic values are respected and promoted. I dare say that one of the most important democratic values is the respect of individuals in each and every one of our families.

We all know men and women who live their homosexuality. Do Reform Party members claim that these people should be eliminated, that their most basic rights should not be recognized? We are not saying that the House should pass a motion to promote homosexuality, no more than it should promote heterosexuality. What we are saying is that if two people, whether a man and a woman, two men or two women, decide to live