

the same individual. Of course, there will always be diversity and differences within any community no matter the size.

It is extremely important that when members of Parliament walks into this Chamber to represent their constituents, they do so for a group of people who feel they have something in common. They identify themselves as a community historically or by virtue of common interests.

I also want to respond to some comments that have been made about the 25 per cent representation. Members from the Bloc know very well that what they have talked about this week cannot be achieved except by constitutional change. To pretend anything else is simply not being straightforward with people.

I do not think we could identify a handful of people in this country who want to go through the turmoil of talking about constitutional change again. There are so many bigger and much more important issues which touch the lives of people daily.

People have contacted me asking why we cannot have a much smaller House of Commons. That is certainly an option. Again, it would require a constitutional change because of minimum representation which is guaranteed to some of our smaller provinces.

I also tell people it is entirely possible to have a very much smaller House of Commons but we would lose something in doing that. Canadians would lose much closer and more personal contact with their members of Parliament.

The people I have talked to value the ability to be in personal contact and have a personal response from their members of Parliament, when they want to discuss an issue with them or have a problem resolved or have recommendations for government action. This is extremely important to Canadians. Coming back to the first point, it is extremely important given the diversity of this country. Therefore, people should be cautious when they suggest we have fewer elected representatives. They would also then have more remote representation.

Mr. Speaker, I only have a few seconds left. Therefore, I move pursuant to Standing Order 26:

That the House continue to sit beyond the ordinary hour of adjournment for the purpose of considering Bill C-69.

• (1705)

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Would those members who object to the motion please rise in their places.

### Government Orders

*And more than 15 members having risen:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** More than 15 members have risen, pursuant to Standing Order 26(2), the motion is deemed to have been withdrawn.

(Motion withdrawn.)

**Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I was listening closely to the parliamentary assistant and I thought it was rather presumptuous of her to state without any doubt that Quebecers do not support the theory of Quebec's sovereigntists. Although it is true that Quebecers rejected the Charlottetown agreement which kind of guaranteed Quebec 25 per cent of the seats in the House of Commons, I want to point out to the hon. member that English-speaking Canadians and the residents of the rest of Canada also voted against the agreement.

So, she should not blame us for the failure of the Charlottetown agreement. I would also remind the hon. member that her leader, the current Prime Minister of Canada, warmly welcomed in his party the man who torpedoed the Meech Lake accord. I also want to take this opportunity to say to the hon. member that it is not because the sovereignty option is currently down in the polls that one must conclude that Quebecers support the federalist option.

I think that, for various reasons, but mostly because of everything that is going on, because of previous threats they have received, because of fear-mongering, Quebecers are reluctant to opt for this avenue, but remember that a marriage run by fear is not a happy one. The hon. member should remember this, because with the growing debt and the deficit they will never get rid of—although they will never admit to it—one day they will have to say to Quebecers: "Please, leave. We are no longer able to afford to be so big, so fat. We can no longer afford all this splendour".

This will quickly put an end to the member's rejoicing. So, I would ask her to be a little less presumptuous and to tell us what is wrong with giving Quebecers 25 per cent of the seats in the House of Commons, when they used to have, at the very beginning of Confederation, almost 50 per cent of them?

I want to remind the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell that Confucius said that the hen has no business ruling the farmyard.

**Mrs. Catterall:** Mr. Speaker, it would be easy to play on the word sovereigntist and claim the support of a majority of Quebecers.

• (1710)

But after yesterday's declaration it has become clear that there will not be a referendum before next fall and that separatists are afraid of what Quebecers might decide. It is very clear that they want a sovereigntist interpretation which would please Quebecers.