

Government Orders

Unlike my hon. colleague who spoke before me, I would hope that my comments will be guided by intelligence rather than emotion. You will understand, however, if occasionally I do get emotional. It seems to be much easier to attempt to discredit members of the Bloc Québécois who were democratically elected by Quebecers than it is to rationalize Bill C-17, an outrage for this party and for this government, which calls itself liberal but will soon have to find a new name, much like the Progressives became the Progressive Conservatives.

Before moving on to the heart of my presentation, I would like to focus on one point that has been troubling me ever since my hon. colleagues began talking about the instability that the Bloc Québécois is creating with its sovereignty plans. Those responsible for the demise of Meech are sitting on the other side of this House. They are the ones responsible for the movement that has grown in Quebec, although neither I nor many of my colleagues felt that Meech would be the agreement to settle Canada's fate once and for all and to clearly satisfy Quebecers. It is a certainty.

However, Meech was an attempt, an open door, and that is why even sovereigntists could not reject it. Those responsible for the death of Meech and for creating permanent instability are not sitting on this side of the House, but rather on the other side.

• (1050)

Instability was a problem during all those years when French Canadian Quebecers were withdrawn, docile and poor.

Getting back to my prepared text—

The Deputy Speaker: Excuse me, Madam, there is a point of order.

Mr. Gérard Asselin (Charlevoix): Mr. Speaker, would you please call the hon. member to order. If he wants to comment, he should be polite enough to listen and comment after the hon. member has finished her speech. Good manners also apply here in the House.

An hon. member: We are as well-mannered as you.

The Deputy Speaker: Let me say that there was a motion from a member in the previous Parliament on a subject which I think affected members more than any other, namely the lack of public respect because we did some things here that the public found awful. I see your point and I hope that your colleagues opposite will respect your point as well.

[*English*]

Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I think you have addressed most of this. The member knows that it is not uncommon for members from time to time after they have given a long speech to walk out into the lobby. As Canadians should know, we have a television monitor there so I was

listening to the hon. member's remarks. I was not being rude to the member.

The record would show that I have listened to many speeches of members of the Bloc Québécois in an effort to understand where they are coming from as they try to destroy the country.

The Deputy Speaker: I will say this in English. If I understood the point, and I was speaking momentarily with counsel at the table, the member was not criticizing the parliamentary secretary. He was criticizing another member in the House for interrupting the speech of the member who had the floor. I do not think the parliamentary secretary was in anybody's mind to be criticized.

We have had this discussion before. The parliamentary secretary, with respect, will remember the low repute that Parliament went into in the last Parliament. He and I were both here. As I said in French, the reason they did is because our constituents thought we behaved improperly in this place.

Therefore, I hope that all new members in this Parliament will give each other more respect than we gave each other in the last Parliament.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Lalonde: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I repeat that the day Bill C-17 passes will be a sad day in Canadian history. Of course, it is much easier for the party in power to talk about anything but this bill, because this bill shows a bias to attack the unemployed, welfare recipients and public servants and carefully avoids touching the wealthy, family trusts and tax shelters.

We agree that something absolutely must be done about the deficit, but we disagree when those opposite attack only the unemployed, the poor and public servants, as we see in this bill. It attacks unemployment insurance and social assistance at a time when unemployment is extremely high, when few Canadians feel their jobs are safe, even and I might say especially small and medium-sized business owners because of recent incidents that have come to my knowledge, incidents that happened not in faraway places but in my own riding, where small businesses have gone bankrupt. I know that a great many small businesses are having a very hard time right now. I will address this issue as well.

• (1055)

The Liberal government decision to cut as much as it has in the unemployment insurance program is an historic one on the part of people who cloak themselves in the Canadian unity flag and claim to be promoting national unity. If they have done their homework and taken a good look at what they are doing, then they should know how much of an impact these cuts to unem-