

*Government Orders*

The member does not live in Quebec as I do. He has not lived in Quebec as I have. If ever he visits Quebec, I invite him to come to my riding. If he had lived in Quebec he would understand clearly that there is an urgency.

A commitment was made by the Prime Minister to make the necessary changes. He had to respond, not with a sense of urgency but with clear leadership, and this is what the Prime Minister has done.

If we take a look at what is happening on the island of Montreal, sadly we see a large number of unemployed and one of the highest rates of poverty. Constitutional bickering since 1976 has put our region in a very sad state.

The Prime Minister had to respond by giving leadership to ensure, as he said in Toronto, a certain amount of political stability not only for Canada but, more important, for Quebec.

An awful lot of colleagues from Quebec have horror stories about small businesses by the twenties or thirties or even larger corporations establishing plants, not as they did in 1976 in other areas of Canada such as Toronto but unfortunately in places like Plattsburg and Florida. I recently spoke to a VP of Northern Telecom who is now opening up a plant in Southeast Asia because of the uncertainty. The Prime Minister had to react.

On the question of veto, we are lending our veto. In all constitutional amendments the federal government has a right of veto on all aspects, whether there are three or four amending formulas. All we have done is simply lend our veto to each of the five regions. Therefore we were able to bypass the delicate process of constitutional reform doomed to failure in the past.

I hope Reformers put aside their partisan politics. After the new year when, after you have had time to celebrate with your families in peace and love, as Canadians always do, I hope you will come back in February and work hand in hand with the government and the premiers to achieve the unity we deserve.

**The Speaker:** I remind hon. members to address the Chair rather than one another.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I believe we have only five minutes left in the debate this afternoon, and I will try to be brief. It may be the last time we have a chance to speak this year. I listened carefully to the hon. member for Vaudreuil, who raised quite a few points. He is also aware of the position of the Bloc Québécois on the veto.

I may recall that from what I read and what I heard from the Minister of Justice, this is not a constitutional veto but a veto for the guidance of the Parliament of Canada. That is why Quebecers realized this was not what they wanted. I may also recall that what we say in this House reflects the views of the Quebec people.

I may remind the hon. member—

**Mr. Discepola:** So we are not Quebecers?

**Mr. Bernier (Gaspé):** No, but I would like to remind the hon. member that if he still reads Quebec newspapers, he will realize that hardly 24 per cent of the population of Quebec believes that the Prime Minister's proposals are a response to their expectations.

So if we are talking about barely 24 per cent, I think we still have the right to rise in the House to say: "Listen, this is an empty shell". And we must not forget the 94 per cent of Quebecers who voted in the last referendum. I will conclude with this. This means that in Quebec, 9.4 out of 10 people understood the question. And I do not understand why the Quebecer from Saint-Maurice did not.

**The Speaker:** Thirty seconds for a short reply.

**Mr. Discepola:** Thirty seconds. Very well, Mr. Speaker.

We are prepared to entrench the veto in the Constitution, but his own leader is preventing us. It is his fault.

If he ever changes his mind, which he has done several times before, we would be willing to discuss entrenching the veto in the Constitution. However, with the means at our disposal, we decided to recognize their veto in this House and in the decisions made by the various departments. We lend our veto, as a government, to the various regions, including the province of Quebec.

However, if your leader decides to change his mind, come and see us.

**An hon. member:** A nice little trinket for Christmas.

**The Speaker:** No, dear colleagues, but I have good news.

[English]

Yesterday afternoon we welcomed to the Table of the House of Commons a new table officer. It does not occur often in Parliament that we have new table officers but we have a new one today, Carol Chafe.

Carol, in the name of my colleagues I welcome you.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

[Translation]

**An hon. member:** A Christmas present.

**The Speaker:** Yes, a Christmas present for the House.

[English]

Pursuant to an order made Tuesday, December 12, 1995, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill now before the House.