

Supply

hesitation. In this case the motion gives the impression of cowardice on the part of the Government by accusing it threatening the national unity because Bill C-72 has not yet been debated at the second reading stage.

Hon. Members will know that the fabric of this country is a very sensitive issue. It was not so long ago that this Government asked the Canadian provinces and federal parliamentarians to have a debate on our Constitution and to discuss the Meech Lake Accord. This was of critical importance. It also gave rise to major hesitations, even among the Liberals opposite, and to deep rifts and resignations. This is a sensitive issue, but what is surprising about the Meech Lake Accord is that, apart from recognizing the Canadian linguistic duality, it also recognized that we have concentrated but not limited French and English-speaking communities, and so on. What Bill C-72 proposes is an even greater commitment on the part of the federal Government. It takes political courage for a national party, a party which is represented throughout the country, in all provinces and all regions, to deal with these sensitive issues which become even more important, more real and more restricting at the political level. It is easy enough for anyone who belongs to a regional Party and who puts all or nearly all his eggs in the same basket to be unconcerned about the political reactions and feelings of people in the west, in the east or in the centre.

I think my colleague the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier could very well have introduced a much more positive motion, appealing to the better sentiments of Hon. Members and urging the Government to introduce the bill which has gained support from both the anglophone and francophone linguistic communities in this country. And as he said himself about his long struggle of almost 20 years, and I quote him textually: "It has not always been easy, but we did make some progress." Sad to say, Madam Speaker, when it comes to these questions we do have here in Parliament and elsewhere in this country certain people who have a somewhat dinosaurian mentality. I have no idea which planet these people inhabit, but they do have a dinosaurian approach. The blue dinosaurs are not alone, there are red dinosaurs as well, and probably a new kind of NDP dinosaurs, green, I believe—

An Hon. Member: Orange.

Mr. Hamelin: Orange. More subtle, particularly in Manitoba. We have to live with that. As Cicero put it: *Quo usque tandem*—How much longer?—*abutere nostra patientia*? How much longer will these dinosaurs try our patience? True enough. And instead of putting the question with a somewhat partisan approach as you did—be careful my dear colleague, this is a very sensitive issue. So many people are searching for platforms, the kind of carriages with which they can so easily find themselves in the ditch. That is what we saw in a recent provincial election. Some people are prepared to stand on platforms which rest on rather shaky foundations, the platform soon becomes a sled which hurtles down the slope, and someone gets hurt. That happens often in the case of cultural

and linguistic issues. You may have noticed that every time someone endorses sensitive issues and tries to get people upset and to spread fear with scarecrows, of course, there are dinosaurs and the odd prehistoric monster on his tail for a while, but all such efforts lead to political failure because Canadians are more mature than we give them credit for. True enough, it is easy—

• (1740)

[English]

—with these questions to play games, to play politics—

[Translation]

It is so easy to play petty politics, to blame all our economic, social, political and even religious woes on Anglophones or Francophones. Go ahead! And it is so easy to play this game when an election is forthcoming, as it is now. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain by telling all sorts of stories to the Canadian people. Let me say it once more: there are, unfortunately, in every political party people who adhere to this pre-historic approach. They stir controversies and raise false issues. They start campaigning with that, with the hope of attracting as many followers as possible by imputing ill intentions or designs to our community or another. Imagine that! There is something of which I should remind the enormous Anglophone community in North America: we are in Canada, and especially in Quebec, a small community of 8 millions lost in an ocean of over 250 million Anglophones. Are we as threatening as all that? There are two possibilities:

[English]

We are very strong and you are so weak.

[Translation]

People are not aware of their force? As a French-speaking nation in America, are we as threatening as that? It is unbelievable! We are a very small group of people and we can frighten 250 million people! It does not make sense. Really, it does not make sense. Yet, there are dinosaurs who are travelling all around frightening people. If these Francophones were going to take away—

[English]

—our jobs, those bastards.

[Translation]

If these Francophones were going to deprive us of our economic security and jobs? That is frightening! They are threatening. What is this? They are disturbing people.

[English]

—annoying people, disturbing people.

[Translation]

I know that this attitude is disappearing slowly in this country, because we are developing more equality, more mutual respect and understanding with the Constitution and this legislation. It is true. This bill has been favourably