

Government Orders

I point this out because that is why the Liberal Party supports the bill. [Translation]

• (1220)

[English]

I would like to say that I am very sorry. I accept, I understand, and I respect the position of the New Democratic Party. It will not vote for the bill, not because it is against the holding of a referendum but because it thinks the bill is no good. That is that party's decision.

We want the Canadian government to have an instrument to consult the people. If we vote against the instrument the government is giving us at last then we do not have the instrument. On one hand the NDP is saying that we should have the possibility of consulting the people through a referendum, but on the other hand it is not voting to allow it to happen. Frankly I accept and understand its position to a certain degree, but I fail to see the logic in it.

There is never perfect legislation in Parliament. Mr. Speaker, you witness day after day bills being studied in Parliament. They are passed but they are never perfect.

I want to give credit to the government. Otherwise it would not have been possible to have these amendments. The Liberal Party presented 12 amendments, 7 of which were accepted by the government. They are amendments that I consider important.

There is a few I would have liked to have seen accepted, but they were not accepted. Anyway, I believe the fundamental exercise here is to give an instrument to the Canadian government to consult the people of Canada on constitutional matters and amendments to the Constitution.

To the Liberal Party this is absolutely essential. We cannot accept that the people of Quebec could be consulted on their political future and the rest of Canada could not be consulted. Therefore, we feel this instrument, this legislation, is a tool in the hands of the government that is absolutely essential at this time. We will certainly support this legislation at third reading.

Mr. Plamondon: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. This member was the last one to rise. During the 10-minute question and comment period, you should not go by any list, but by the first members to rise in order to be recognized.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I want to remind the hon. member, who has a lot of respect for the parliamentary process, that traditionally, when an hon. member has just made a speech, the Speaker looks to the other side of the House. According to this great British parliamentary tradition, I looked opposite the direction of the previous speaker and I noticed the hon. member for Edmonton South West standing up. Right after his question, I would be glad, of course, to look over your side and, if you are standing up, to recognize you. The hon. member for Edmonton South West.

Mr. Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, I just want to point out that the previous speaker was a member from the other side of the House. The present speaker is from this side, and then we will have a question from the other opposition party, the NDP. It is quite normal that we should also have an opportunity to speak.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I think the hon. member is trying to do indirectly what the Standing Orders will not allow him to do directly, that is to question the Speaker's ruling. The previous speaker was to my left, so I looked right. I am glad to recognize the hon. member for Edmonton South West.

[English]

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I think our friends opposite, having had a little practice over the last few days, have decided they like to shout and barrack.

I have a few questions for my hon. friend for Papi-neau—Saint-Michel who has contributed so much to the constitutional process in our country over the last dozen years or more.