

The leader of the NDP mentioned again that she regretted that I had not called an election. Audrey, I forgot to tell you, I have just come from seeing the Governor General.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mulroney: I also want to thank the members of this House, including my party colleagues and others I have had the privilege of meeting here, some of whom are friends from way back who unfortunately opted for the wrong side. Yes, Marcel, I forgive you. I see my neighbour and friend, Paul Martin. But if I say any more, they will fire me as leader of the Conservative Party. The fact is that as members we have a unique opportunity to create and strengthen ties of friendship.

What brings us together in most cases is our country, Canada. And that applies to our various political parties, the official parties in this House. Canada has always been my concern and my passion, and I would say that applies to many members here.

• (1430)

For 10 years I have concentrated all my efforts on maintaining and strengthening Canada's unity because I am convinced that without unity there can be no greatness for this country, no prosperity for its provinces and no happiness for its citizens.

[*English*]

All of us have been privileged to have inherited the most extraordinary country on the face of this earth and all of us, the best we can, contribute to making it a little bit better.

This is the finest forum for making this happen. This is where democracy, the collision of ideas, the collision of personalities and policies, comes into play. Its result is democracy in its purest form. I do not always like the result after I leave Question Period. Some of my people cry a lot, but I try to get them going again.

The fact of the matter is that vigorous exchanges like what occurs here are part and parcel of the best dimensions of democracy. However, most of all what keeps us here and what has motivated all of us to come here is our belief in and our love of Canada and all this

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magnificent country has done for every member of this House and will continue to do, God willing, for decades and decades to come.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the disposition of the House to proceed with Question Period for the usual 45 minutes?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION OFFICES

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

I want to ask the Minister of Finance if it is correct that on Friday after the House adjourns for one week the government will announce the closing of 45 regional immigration offices in every part of Canada. This means that applications for work permits, visitor visas, student visas, family class and sponsored refugees will have to be made by mail and decided upon at some distant centre without any face-to-face interview.

I want to ask the minister why the government is proceeding with this plan when the pilot projects were a failure and when they showed that this system would be extremely inefficient and open the door to criminality? Why is the government going ahead with this crazy plan?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, it has come to my attention that members of the union of employment and immigration employees are circulating a list detailing the official list of Canada immigration centres which could be closed or would be closed following the reconfiguration exercise. Following my announcement earlier in the year about plans for Immigration Canada to attempt to better serve Canadians in a more efficient way and at a more effective cost, yes indeed, there will be a reconfiguration. But what is important for members and Canadians to know is that the only motive behind this is to try to better serve Canadians and do it in a more efficient way.