

*Adjournment Debate***PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT
MOTION***[English]*

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

*[Translation]***FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS—REQUEST FOR
PUBLICATION OF STUDY ON FEDERALISM**

Mr. Fabien Roy (Beauce): Mr. Speaker, on November 16 last, as reported in *Hansard* on page 1393, I asked the Prime Minister (Mr. Clark) to table in the House the famous report prepared by a group of researchers who at the beginning of 1977 carried on a study dealing with the relations during the last ten years, that is between 1967 and 1977, of the federal government and the Quebec government. Following the publication of an interim report, we were told that some 112 government agencies or departments took part in this assessment and there were 485 occurrences of federal intervention in provincial jurisdiction, especially that of Quebec. To the question which I asked the Prime Minister, he replied as follows:

We believe that we must honour the commitment given by the former government.

Mr. Speaker, of course I could not be satisfied with that answer since I had the opportunity, as you had, to read in the newspapers that the former minister of the Liberal government, the member for Saint-Maurice (Mr. Chrétien), asked that the studies be made public following a press conference and a public statement. The Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. La Salle) has also stated publicly that the studies should be disclosed. He did not object to the publication of the studies and still more recently, two editors of two important Quebec dailies, dealt with the contents of the interim report and effectively asked, on behalf of Quebecers, that those studies be made public. Allow me to quote the comments of Mr. Marcel Adam in an editorial in the newspaper *La Presse*.

● (2210)

I quote Mr. Adam's words:

Messrs. Clark and Jarvis have argued that these studies were carried out with the help of civil servants to whom the former government had given a commitment of confidentiality.

Surely it should be possible to honour this commitment by publishing a version of the study expurgated from anything that could identify those who contributed to it.

Mr. Clark must do so to hold the promise he has made to give access to any information that could be useful for public discussion, and also to demonstrate, as he himself has been trying to prove since May 22, that the functional quality of federalism is much more due to the attitudes and to the spirit that drives a given government political party than to the federal system as such.

[Mr. Speaker.]

In the context of the referendum debate and of the wide ranging reform of Canadian federalism, it would be unhealthy and ominous that important documents, however embarrassing be withdrawn from public discussion.

If federalism needs secrecy and dissimulation to survive in Canada, then it is a lost cause.

Which is not my opinion.

And this article is signed by Mr. Marcel Adam, editor for *La Presse*.

I could quote as well some comments which were published in a remarkable editorial signed by Mr. Michel Roy, editor in chief of *Le Devoir*, and entitled "A document that must be published". In the context of the present referendum debate some cabinet members of this government believe that studies should be published since the former minister of the previous government does not confirm that there are commitments to protect in a way those who prepared this report, since there was a motion introduced by a Liberal member; at least there would seem to be some fair play on that side of the House.

Yesterday a motion was introduced under Standing Order 43 asking that these studies be tabled. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, in light of all these facts and statements, and the desire of all members of this House, I wonder by what prerogative we can sacrifice the right of members to be informed and the interests of the people, in order to protect the interests of a few people who are supposed to serve the country.

Mr. Speaker, if the government refuses, it will have to state clearly who are those people it wants to protect because it is a matter of public interest that these studies be known and tabled. The government must tell us their names. Does it want to protect the former government? Do they want to protect officials who went beyond their functions, who exceeded their duties and responsibilities, or do they want to hide the abuses of the federal government? I think, Mr. Speaker, that given the discussions that are now taking place among the public, given the interest that the interim report has raised up among Canadians, the government has no choice but to accept my request today on behalf of the population, a request which has been echoed by hon. members from the official opposition and by some members of the cabinet.

● (2215)

[English]

Mr. John Bosley (Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be given this opportunity to respond to the hon. member for Beauce (Mr. Roy) on the matter he has raised since it will allow us to explain the reasons for the government's actions with respect to what is referred to as the "Interim Report on Relations Between the Government of Canada and the Province of Quebec, 1967-1977."