

After all, we are a majority in Quebec, a majority of Quebec MPs. I hope very many Quebecers will have heard the hon. member say in this House today that our comments are only hogwash and I hope they will draw their own conclusions from his disrespectful remarks.

An hon. member: Downright insulting.

Mrs. Gagnon: It is not the first time I hear the hon. member speak that way. He talks as if the world revolves around him. He is the centre of the universe and says: "Just look at me; I am well-travelled, I am fantastic."

An hon. member: Yes, he is an only child.

Mrs. Gagnon: I do not think it is fitting for a member of this House to say: "Just look at me; I am well-travelled, I am fantastic".

An hon. member: Yes, indeed. "Look at me. I have risen to the top of the heap".

Mrs. Gagnon: A member should represent the public, be the voice of the people. The people of Quebec have given us a vote of confidence and sent us to Ottawa to defend their interests.

We defend positions that are not being defended by federalists living in Quebec, who want to repatriate powers, who want full control in Quebec. We did not invent that.

Mr. Gagnon: Madam Speaker, I think it is uncalled for to call someone—I will not repeat the words that were used to describe me.

• (1355)

I am criticized for having the intellectual curiosity to be interested in what is happening elsewhere and for wanting to share this with Quebecers. I have always recognized the existence of the Official Opposition. It hurts them to hear this voice from the Gaspé, this young federalist, because, and you know this as well as I do, we represent the majority of Quebecers.

Look at the results of the last election in Quebec. Scarcely 44 per cent of Quebecers supported the Parti Québécois. Unfortunately, the opposition, and especially its home base, are not so sure they want to have their referendum as soon as possible. Increasingly, Quebecers are recognizing Canada's role and the generosity of the Canadian federation.

An hon. member: Token Quebecer.

An hon. member: Opportunist.

Mr. Gagnon: I hear terms being used like "token Quebecer" and "opportunist". I hear all kinds of things from the opposition. I am proud to be the member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, I have the confidence of my riding and I am working in the best interests of my constituents, and this means being in Quebec, a Quebec that is part of Canada. Is that clear?

S. O. 31

The Speaker: It being nearly 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to Statements by Members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Paul Steckle (Huron—Bruce, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at yesterday's meeting of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food I tabled a report entitled "Future Directions for Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food: A Huron—Bruce Perspective".

This report is the result of a series of intensive meetings which I organized in my riding with the objective of taking stock of where those who work in the agri-food sector today see their industry going tomorrow.

It was designed to support and enhance the objectives of the study on the future of agriculture on which the committee, together with its colleagues from the Senate, has been working since August, and which as a result of those who claim to represent the interests of the grassroots community has been effectively blocked from undertaking its most important phase, consulting directly with Canadians who work in Canada's agri-food sector in their workplaces.

I would encourage all members to initiate something along these lines to complement the work that is being done for what is after all one of Canada's major bedrock industries.

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[Translation]

FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITIES

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last week, in its Saturday issue, *The Globe and Mail* revealed alarming statistics concerning francophones outside Quebec, despite the Official Languages Act passed 25 years ago.

In fact, francophones have never been so vulnerable. More than a third of francophones outside Quebec speak English at home and their rate of assimilation is at 36 per cent. It is as high as 75 per cent in British Columbia and 70 per cent in Saskatchewan.

Instead of helping francophone and Acadian communities in Canada, federal institutions are speeding up their assimilation. The refusal of the Minister of Canadian Heritage to put pressure on cable companies such as Rogers, Laurentien Cable and Cogeco, which recently decided to eliminate several French-