

*Government Orders*

because they were part of the Soviet block for a long time, because they lived through difficulties, because they are small countries which valiantly defended their sovereignty, which survived the Soviet empire's steamroller, which maintained their language, which maintained their cultural identity, which defended themselves, and which succeeded against all odds in becoming sovereign as soon as the Soviet empire loosened its hold slightly. If they have succeeded in doing so, it might then have been said that we, Canadians, rightfully considered the boy scouts of the world, are prepared to defend widows and orphans everywhere in the world."

• (1310)

As soon as Estonia and Latvia were free of the Soviet Union, the first thing they did was to demand sovereignty and seek recognition. We could have said "We will give Estonia and Latvia special treatment, we will help them, we will support them because this is an acknowledgment of their contribution to the world balance of democracy." But no. We echo what the spokesman for the opposition said just now: "It is a matter of interest. We have investments over there; they probably have some here. We sign. No problem. A matter of interest. Not a matter of politics. Not a matter of feelings. Not a matter of anything at all. Not of acknowledging countries which have succeeded in gaining sovereignty, which have lived through 50 years of communism and the Russian steamroller. Which have survived all that. No, just a matter of interest. Well, all right then.

Take the example of Hungary. We know what happened in Hungary in the 1950s, an attempted revolt against the Soviet empire. The Hungarians were crushed. Canada took many of them in, to its credit. Although I was very young at the time, I remember it because it made a strong impression upon me. But the bill does not say "We are entering into a protocol with Hungary because it did great things during the 1950s and because there are many Hungarians in Canada and so we will help them now". No. They say: "No, we signed a protocol with Hungary because it is in our interest to do so. Hungarians have investments in Canada, and we have investments in Hungary. We want to continue to trade with them, so we sign agreements. That is how things work at the international level". The same for Trinidad and Tobago. In fact, the opposition critic explained that some harmonization was necessary in our trade with Trinidad and Tobago. No problem at all.

So I read this bill and, speaking on behalf of the official opposition, I say: "We have agreements with Latvia, Estonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Hungary and 55 other countries in the world. Wonderful". So I start off by saying: "There are certain things that are done involving large countries and small countries. Small countries which Canada does not seem to look down on, which it respects because they are sovereign". That is the beauty of sovereignty: you get respect. Whether you are big or

small, when you are sovereign, you are respected because there are international conventions and practices, and the rules of the game are clearly established. And that is why certain countries want to become sovereign. Today, Quebec is one of those countries. I say country, because to me, Quebec is a country.

Look at Quebec. When you see Quebecers and hear them talk and look at their history, you realize that, like it or not, Quebec is different from other parts of Canada. This is not to denigrate the people of Newfoundland, Franco-Ontarians, Westerners and British Columbians, but Quebecers are a bit different, and today, some of them are saying: "At the international level, we are going to make this country a sovereign state. And now, one of the arguments being made in this debate is that Quebec will be in for hard times".

Daniel Johnson said: "Oops, if you become sovereign, there go 92,000 jobs". The very next day or three or four days or a week later, when they had a chance to think about it, they realized that 92,000 jobs was perhaps not impressive enough. So a respected federal finance minister told Quebec: "92,000? Probably more like one million". Not 900,000, not 900,100 or 909,150 but one million. That is impressive. We are "millionaires" in terms of job losses. He is not saying: "Oh, you will not lose one million jobs", but: "You might lose one million jobs", because if you ever do, since you are not big guys but little guys, with a small economy, you will definitely not be in the big league. If you are little, maybe Canada, which is bigger than you, or the United States, which is bigger than you, will say, we do not trade with the little guys, we only trade with the big guys.

• (1315)

So then there would be no more trade with Canada, no more trade between Quebec and Canada, no more trade between Quebec and the United States—this means a million jobs. Obviously it is a million jobs, if nobody buys what we produce and we do not buy what others want to sell us. Obviously, in trade and in production, there are going to be losses, but that is the way it works.

How does it work internationally? It works the way it does in this bill. Countries, states, make treaties and agreements based on their interests. That is how it works. For sure, some people are touchy because of certain events, they are unhappy, they say that things are going to work differently, and we hope this is not the way it is going to be.

The Leader of the Official Opposition, Lucien Bouchard, will come and start negotiations. Maybe people will say they do not want to negotiate with us, they do not like us, we are demagogues, we are ethnic, we are out to do a number on ourselves and we are shrinking our economy. We will say to them: well, we had a vote, we want to reach an agreement with you, and we will reach it even if we do not reach it on the basis of the friendship that still developed over the years and centuries.