

Business of the House

already have been accepted at the committee on electoral reform which you are expecting sometime in June.

At least if we have a public understanding, a public acceptance by you that everybody is impatient and defending Canada is absolutely important, nobody on this side will take any lesson from anybody as to the importance of preserving Canada. I assure you of that.

We would like to have some assurance that at least the committee will not function as a *rouleau compresseur* as we say in French. The minister, with patience, should just get up once in his lifetime and give the assurance to the House that nobody is going to be bullied. We do not accept to be bullied.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, you do not know how much I look forward to these lectures by the hon. member for Saint-Denis on decorum and behaviour. I especially like the part in which he talks about my being arrogant.

I wonder if the hon. members of the Liberal party would give me a chance to answer their colleague who asked for an answer.

On the question of electoral reform and the changes, as the hon. member has suggested, all members of the committee from all parties are working together to get changes to the Elections Act. As I have indicated to our members, and I presume similar indications from the other parties, a package of amendments which would be agreeable to the political parties in terms of amending the Elections Act is something that I as House leader would schedule and treat with dispatch to change the Elections Act. If these were possible to do, it would not preclude the Chief Electoral Officer's implementing them before the next election.

The hon. member keeps heckling me.

Mr. Prud'homme: I am not heckling.

Mr. Andre: I wish he would allow me to answer his question before he stands up and interrupts me.

Mr. Prud'homme: Mr. Speaker, he may be heckled by some, but he knows that I have too much respect for the institution and for him as a responsible man.

I am not heckling. I am trying to get some answers. He knows that already these have been accepted by the committee. He knows that we know that most of these amendments will be acceptable to the Chief Electoral Officer.

• (1520)

I do not like these secrets going around all the time. These are facts that he knows and he knows we know, so why should he beat around the bush all the time?

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order as the hon. member from the Liberal caucus.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please. It is my mistake. I thought the hon. government House leader had finished his answer. The hon. government House leader has the floor and then I will recognize the hon. member for Churchill.

Mr. Andre: The hon. member is sincere and he does want to hear the answer. The answer is that I am certainly agreeable to any amendments to the Elections Act which are agreeable to all sides of the House that we can put in place that the Chief Electoral Officer could implement in a way that would not cause the delay of a referendum or a plebiscite or an election.

However, what we are talking about in terms of the plebiscite legislation allowing the plebiscite to be held if a decision is taken on the basis of the Elections Act. If it is prudent to amend the Elections Act so that it could be implemented immediately, then let us by all means do that. Let us not confuse the two and attempt to use the enabling legislation for a plebiscite as a circuitous route to amend the Elections Act because they are quite different.

That is the only point I would make. It would be out of order and as far as I am concerned a total confusion to what the intent of Bill C-81 is, namely to use Bill C-81 to try to amend the Elections act. Amendments to the Elections Act to improve it in accordance with the recommendations of Lortie that have been agreed to by all sides of the House are certainly something I would be