

*The Address**[Translation]*

He talks of Canadian citizens. For five years straight I have heard the member for Sherbrooke, previously minister of this and that, talking about Canadian big business without ever mentioning Canadians. Today he remembers them.

I know the member is a grassroots politician. All of a sudden, he is forced to start all over again, to go from door to door. I congratulate him on his door-to-door campaign. It is a good start. Maybe, 25 or 30 years from now, the Progressive Conservative Party will become the official opposition.

I am not particularly attempting to reply to the member for Sherbrooke who seems suddenly to have taken it upon himself to change the rules of the game. I have always thought, during the five years that I was here, that one was not to address other members directly in the House, that one had to address the Speaker. The rules seem to have changed. I would like to comment on the House rules. Following the speech by the minister for Heritage Canada, opposition members were allowed to speak.

• (1105)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger) I would just like to remind the member for Carleton—Gloucester that when a point of order has been raised the Speaker deals with it after questions and comments.

The member for Sherbrooke's speech seems to have aroused a lot of interest. In order to allow members on both sides of the House to comment or ask questions, I would ask the member for Carleton—Gloucester to confine himself to the speech. Later, we could certainly discuss any other matter which he might want to raise.

Mr. Bellemare: Mr. Speaker, agreed. I give notice that I would like to raise a point of order as soon as questions and comments are over.

I wish to go back to our comedian from Sherbrooke and tell him that the difference between the new government and the old government he was part of is that: there are glib talkers and then there are people of little action. The member for Sherbrooke has become one of those glib talkers.

The member for Sherbrooke for whom I have much affection and admiration, has made great progress. I would like to have heard him use the same tone to defend the public good over the course of the last five years. I must then congratulate him on his speech. He has finally seen the light. At long last, he is talking about people from Sherbrooke, from Chicoutimi. He has not mentioned the citizens of the national capital region but he has spoken of the westerners and the Reform Party. He referred to the Bloc Québécois and to Canadians in general. He did forget to

ask for absolution for the great sin he committed while in "another world" during nine years; that is, being spokesperson for big business rather than for Canadian citizens.

Mr. Charest: Mr. Speaker, allow me to return the compliment to my friend from Carleton—Gloucester. I know him well and have great affection for him, but I hope the showering of my affections on him will not be quite so painful as his on me.

I can accept the member's reproaches. I do believe the Canadian people passed judgment on October 25, as I recall, and that judgment was quite harsh. I do not know how long the hon. member intends to rehash the fact and harp upon it. There are two members left in the House representing the Progressive Conservative Party. My colleague still feels the need today to rise and strike another blow. What can I do? Such is human nature.

All I can say is that I have also seen that feeling. The member's comments, when he says that I am the leader of nothing, border on scorn. I heard him clearly. That is his point of view. About 16 per cent of the Canadian population would disagree with him. I do not need any advice from my colleague about going door to door or about winning people's faith. I wish to remind him where he is. He is in a Parliament in which each person present has been elected by his or her riding. I was thus elected and I defer to the good judgment of the citizens of my riding. I leave it to them to decide if my presence here has any less value than his own, as he seems to think.

If this is an example of his feelings and attitude to come during his tenure in government, I can only wish him luck. I have seen it before, and I have also seen the results over time.

Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I have listened with keen interest to the speech by the former Deputy Prime Minister of Canada. Obviously he has told us that in this House or in this Parliament, it is six of one and half a dozen of the other.

• (1110)

During the last election, Canadians elected a new government and Ontario has majority representation in this government, luckily for Canada and for its regions. In Quebec, we had another choice and the majority voted for the Bloc québécois. The same thing happened in the West where voters elected a majority of Reform Party candidates.

I think we must give the government a chance to prove itself. Obviously, it will soon have to tackle job creation and deficit reduction. It is true that the former government showed us clearly that it was incapable of solving the serious problems confronting Canada and Canadians let them know clearly what it thought of them.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.