

*Government Orders*

respect and it is gaining time by holding this debate to sound out the House. We have people asking us: "Where are those Liberals who, during the last campaign, were waving their little red book as if they were disciples of Mao and, whatever the question, invariably answered, and their leader was the first to it: It is in the red book. Check in the red book for economic matters. Check it for defence issues. It is all in there"? The red book contained all the answers.

Here we are now, and both the Reform Party and the Bloc Québécois start off by saying that we are open to a change in the member participation process, but let us not go overboard in the other direction and have day-long debates like yesterday and today. And there are three more planned for next week. Three months have gone by since the election, and the people are still waiting for the red book to be implemented. We have had a very vague, non-specific throne speech, yet the government has no bills to table.

It has become a joke among the jobless in my riding. The joke goes like this: What is the difference between a federal Liberal member and an unemployed Joe? The answer is: Unlike the Liberal member, the unemployed once had a job. Has it come to the point where our elected Liberal members do not put pressure on their government any more? Have they lost faith in their red book? What is happening? In the debate today, they are contradicting one another. Where are the big guns of the party? They are quiet. What is the use of debating? The opposition has a clear position. The Reform Party has a clear position and so does the NDP. Incidentally, I am surprised that they are not taking part in this debate. Perhaps are they going to later. I certainly hope so.

**Mr. Robinson:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I simply want to tell the hon. member that we have been trying to participate in this debate for three hours; consequently, it is not right to suggest that we do not want to participate. We are trying. We want to participate because we are the only ones who oppose the cruise missile tests, since the Bloc supports the government's position.

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** In my opinion, it is not a point of order from the hon. member.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Plamondon:** Madam Speaker, I can understand the hon. member's position since I had to go through this for three years. I sincerely hope that he will express his views because he represents a party which, over the past three years, has left its

mark in the history of our country and, on occasion, of Quebec as well.

I want to conclude by discussing the relevancy of this debate, and especially the lack of a government position. When I refer to the government, I mean the ministers concerned. I am surprised that there is no information from the department of National Defence. We submitted requests to the public affairs service of that Department to obtain documents. The department was willing to provide us with all the required documents. Yet, because of government directives, we were not able to obtain those documents. I therefore ask the minister—I see one sitting over there—to convey this message to the Prime Minister's Office. If you decide again to hold such a debate, on this issue or any other one, I would hope that you will be more open-minded so that we can have access to all the necessary documents to have a real debate. We are not playing for time. We really want to express our views and we want the government to do the same. Both sides must give their opinion, but they must also have the opportunity to refer to all the documents which can influence our national defence policy.

• (1850)

I will now get to the subject of this debate. I would like to recall the excellent comments made by the hon. member for Saint-Jean when he referred to the old line and the new line on letting the Americans do their tests. At the time, and in fact today, the NDP has not changed its position although the world situation has changed dramatically—there was still a nuclear threat, and allowing such tests was seen as encouraging arms proliferation. Today, we have to look at this from an entirely different angle. The global context has changed, as was said earlier by members for the Reform Party and our own leader. It has changed in that we no longer have two blocs confronting each other but the occasional isolated conflict.

As the hon. member for Saint-Jean said earlier, if we use these tests to enhance our security and concentrate more on ways to defend our democracy, we are less likely to put the lives of men, women and children and our armed personnel at risk.

Earlier today, the hon. member for Portneuf compared the tests and giving the Americans permission to proceed with the seat belt in a car. You may never have an accident, but it always better to put on your seat belt. We approve of the tests as a way to maximize the security of our territory and also on the basis of our military agreements with the Americans and important economic and security considerations.