

*Government Orders*

[English]

**Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre):** Madam Speaker, the question from the hon. member suggested there may be 75 here who want to leave this place but I do not for a minute think that they represent the majority of the voters of the province of Quebec.

I suggest the majority of the voters in that province do not want to leave Canada. They want to be represented in this place by politicians who are going to keep Canada together, not tear it apart and that will be corrected in the next election.

**Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, Bill C-69 is a very significant piece of legislation. It is an honour for me to follow the member for Simcoe Centre. I am enjoying the kind of debate that has been generated around this particular topic.

I wish to look at this bill from three points of view. I want to look at it from the point of view of democracy, the point of view of fiscal responsibility and the point of view of leadership.

Let me first speak on the first point with regard to democracy. The whole democratic system in Canada is represented through the election of representatives on the basis of the particular party they represent. It makes the representation a rather difficult one because there are three things we have to look at when we are that kind of a representative. We have the mandate that our party has given us. It represents the policies and principles which that party has developed in its election platform and its approach to government.

The Reform Party has a tripod that supports the representation that we as Reformers will give to the House and to the people of our constituencies. First, we will reform the democratic system in Canada as it exists today. The first requirement is to represent the people according to their wishes and represent them to this House, not this House to the people.

The second principle is that Reformers will manage the affairs of the country in a fiscally responsible manner. We will have a balanced budget. We will not spend money that we do not have. We will treat the money that is given to us by the taxpayers as money kept in trust. It ought to be treated at least as well as any personal money we would spend. In some cases we should treat it more significantly and with greater respect than if it is our own.

• (1155)

The third principle of the mandate the Reform Party has given us is that we want our streets to be safe. We want the property and lives of individuals to be secure. Men, women and children should be able to walk down the streets with impunity, not in fear of being attacked. To that end, we want to reform the criminal justice system.

That is the first duty of a Reform representative. It is the mandate. We told the people that we would represent them, be fiscally responsible and reform the justice system.

A second part in the representation is this. The people have trusted us to represent the Reform Party because of certain talents, abilities and their confidence in us. They expect us to exercise our best judgment concerning the problems and issues that will face this country at any given time. We will act in the best interests of the people we represent as we understand them and not in our personal interests. That is significant.

There is a third area in which we want to represent the people. It is on certain moral issues such as capital punishment. We would conduct a referendum in which we want them to cast their ballot on an issue, yes or no.

There are three very distinct aspects to the business of representation and Reformers want to be true to all three of them. It does not make the task easy. It makes it a very responsible one, an accountable one where we can stand before the people and say: "This is what we stand for. This is the judgment we will apply and we want you to have a voice on the issues that affect you directly and significantly on a day to day basis". In a democratic system it is the first thing we will do.

It also means we listen to the people. The people told us one thing about the size of the government. They told us it is too big. It is too big in numbers of representatives and too big in the way it intrudes into the lives of the people, whether in business, families, our communities. No matter where it is, government is all pervasive. The people told us they wanted less government.

The bill flies in the face of that observation. The bill says more MPs, there should be 301 MPs, not 295. The hon. member across the way suggests this is a sermon. This is the most accurate position in terms of democracy. If the member does not understand that, he had better learn to listen to the difference between fact and simple statements.

That is the problem the Liberals have. They make all kinds of statements but where is the action on those statements?

**Mr. Forseth:** What do the people want?

**Mr. Schmidt:** We only need one member on that side of the House, the Prime Minister. All they do over there is listen to what the Prime Minister says. He tells them what they will do, when they will do it, how they will do it and sometimes he explains why they should do it: "Because I said so". That is not democracy. On that basis we could reduce the size of the House rather dramatically.

One other point has to be recognized. If the government is going to start listening to the people and if it is going to demonstrate what is said in the bill, that it is actually going to consult with the people, I ask the government with whom will it consult?