

Mr. Fortin: Mr. Speaker, I wish to say, on behalf of my party, that we have moved no amendment. If the hon. member for Rimouski (Mr. LeBlanc) was more often in the House, he would know that we disposed of it yesterday.

We are anxious to hear the rest of the speech by the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order. First, the Chair wants to point out to the hon. member for Rimouski that he did not raise a question of privilege, but a point of order. However, I believe that, in view of the present confusion, the Chair should take the opportunity of reminding the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) to stick as much as possible to the motion on third reading of Bill C-181.

Hon. Members have been allowed up to now to stray temporarily from the subject, but to go back on the whole constitutional question in Canada is quite another matter. The hon. member should revert to Bill C-181 in the next few minutes.

Mr. La Salle: Mr. Chairman, the member for Rimouski (Mr. LeBlanc) was not aware that we were on third reading of the bill, that amendments had been dealt with long ago and that they had not been accepted anyway.

As to whether I strayed from the subject, I did so in order to show the long standing shilly-shally attitude of the Federal government with regard to the powers which should be granted to Quebec and which are required for her emancipation as a French-Canadian nation, since her powers have often been trampled down. A climate of dissatisfaction has indeed appeared in the province of Quebec.

The hesitation of the federal government is responsible for the formation of a third party in Quebec, the Parti Québécois, that nevertheless got 23 per cent of the votes at the last April elections. It means that one French Canadian out of three voted for the independence of Quebec.

The prolonged hesitation of the federal government which turns a deaf ear to the claims of Quebec cannot give us economic stability and create the atmosphere of confidence we need and in which we would no longer have to pass special legislation.

That is the problem. We can look everywhere, but nothing will be solved if we do not recognize that the Constitution must be renewed to define clearly the powers Quebec needs and has been demanding for so long. For the information of my colleagues, not only those from Quebec—as they know it already although many of them do not dare say so—but for those from the other provinces, I say that the Constitution, has to be amended because it is the only way of enabling people to keep on believing in a strong Canada and the province of Quebec to believe that its future is within Canada. To refuse to listen to the claims made by the Quebec governments over the last ten years, is to close one's door to them and to hasten the independence of Quebec. It is to run the risk of being faced with more problems.

Public Order Act, 1970

Such things must be said in this House. I did so for the guidance of all the members. I know that some people find it more difficult to say such things. As a Quebecer I believe in a rejuvenated constitution—we must hurry—it is, a matter of months—so that the province of Quebec may have the assurance that the emancipation of the French Canadian nation can be accomplished inside Quebec, in French, without any prejudice to the rest of this country. It is as two nations that we will be able to build a splendid Canada and not in doing as we have done for the last 100 years.

Unfortunate statements were made in this House during the debate on this legislation, including some about the possibility of a parallel government being set up. I thought that the arguments put forward on the day when we voted on the War Measures Act were sufficient to support these measures. Then there was the beginning of a rumour to the effect that a parallel government was to be set up in Quebec, and the government suggested that it was founded.

As a result of the questions which were asked during the following week, we realized that this parallel government never existed, but this persisting rumour gave certain people an opportunity to accuse men who have always stoutly defended the aspirations of the French-Canadian nation, and I do not approve of those who used this debate to tarnish the reputation of a man for which I have great consideration, namely, Mr. Claude Ryan. I say it in this House—

Some hon. Members: Shame, shame!

Mr. La Salle: I am aware that this does not sound pleasing for all the Quebec members since Mr. Claude Ryan, at a certain time, was not in agreement with the governments of the day. But I have for quite a long time believed in this journalist's integrity. No one found fault with Mr. Ryan when he supported the Liberal party before the elections of last April 29 and now, because he disapproves of the emergency measures legislation or of the way the government have lead the discussions, there has been an attempt at sullyng the reputation of some people for no reasons whatsoever.

Everybody is wondering: who are those responsible for this situation? Definitely, some members of the FLQ whom I condemn without reservation, and I know that all members of this House agree with me. Now, whether they number 25, 200, 1,000 or 3,000 that is quite a different question. Some one has gone as far as suggesting that the government has been using a sledge hammer to crack a peanut. And I even wonder whether this peanut has now been effectively cracked.

Recently, I was reading a newspaper article by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who lived in times somewhat similar to our own. I shall read an excerpt from that article in this House, because it is signed by an authentic Liberal. At that time, in 1890, problems were being experienced with the Metis. Sir Wilfrid Laurier said, in his article, with regard to a certain rebellion, and I quote:

—what is detestable is not the rebels but the men who, having the advantages of power do not fulfil its duties; the men who,