

RN AND NUPES: *COUP DE THÉÂTRE* AT THE FRENCH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Posted on October 29, 2022



By choosing to vote for the Left's censure motion,

Marine Le Pen reinforced her status as the leading opponent of Emmanuel Macron. She showed that the overthrow of the government remained her primary objective and that she intended to give herself the means to achieve it.

Category: [NEWS](#)

Tags: [France](#), [Hélène de Lauzun](#), [Les Républicains](#), [Marine Le Pen](#), [NUPES](#), [Rassemblement National](#)

Following [the forced passage](#) of the budget by Elisabeth Borne's government, the opposition activated the constitutional device of the 'motion of censure' on Monday, October 24th—in order to thwart the project—by attempting to overthrow the government. Three motions of censure were tabled in turn on the state and social security budgets—two by the left-wing NUPES coalition, and one by the Rassemblement National (RN). Although they failed, they nevertheless significantly changed the French political game and the balance of power between the parties.

Marine Le Pen had initially announced her intention to deny support to any motion tabled by the NUPES. However, a dramatic turn of events took place on Monday the 24th in the National Assembly as the leader of the Rassemblement National deputies announced that her group would support the motions of censure from the Left—a political move that did not go unnoticed. According to observers, in a matter of seconds, the atmosphere in the chamber changed dramatically, and members of the government were visibly destabilised.

The decision was taken by the RN just before the session, at the final meeting of the RN group at 2 p.m. When the question of voting on the NUPES motion on the state budget was put forward, “there was a spontaneous unanimity” in favour of it, explained RN MP Jean-Philippe Tanguy to [The Huffington Post](#). The parliamentarian explained that the RN's

strategy was to leave doubt in order to remain in control of the game. “If we had said from the beginning that we were ready to vote on the motion of the far Left, they could have put anything in it. We assumed an ambiguity to keep our freedom of vote until the end,” he explains.

With the support of the RN, the motion tabled by the NUPES received a hefty 239 votes, but far from the 289 needed to overthrow Elisabeth Borne's government, which therefore remains in place, while the budget is adopted.

But the political signal sent by the Rassemblement National is nonetheless very significant on several levels. With this gesture, Marine Le Pen reinforced her status as the first opponent of Emmanuel Macron, by showing that the overthrow of the government remained her primary objective and that she intended to give herself the means to achieve it. Moreover, by showing her ability to support a motion that did not emanate from her party, she defeated the accusation of sectarianism, freeing that designation to fall on the shoulders of the NUPES, which has only been able to vote its own motions. The left-wing parties found themselves very embarrassed by Marine Le Pen's decision to support them. They, therefore, found themselves in the position of voting ‘the same thing’ as the RN—in this case, their own motion—something they had sworn never to do. [For David Desgouilles](#), political columnist for the weekly *Marianne*, this can only be considered a “master stroke” from Le Pen.

Finally, and this is perhaps the most important lesson of this episode, the Rassemblement National forcefully confronted the group of Les Républicains with its contradictions. Their party did not vote on any motion of censure, neither those of the NUPES nor *a fortiori* that of the RN.

https://twitter.com/MLP_officiel/status/1584600311779368960?s=20&t=2uZHEUzHMDvKeL2atSt9LQ

Fifty votes out of the 62 of their group could have been enough to overthrow the Borne government. But most LR MPs were [simply absent](#) on Monday, October 24th.

In an open letter published in *Le Journal du dimanche*, entitled “La réforme oui, la chienlit non!,” 53 LR and related deputies announced their refusal to vote on the motions of censure tabled by the Nupes and the RN. They claim to have chosen against ‘chaos,’ even though they radically contest the budget proposed by Emmanuel Macron's party: a position that is difficult to understand in the eyes of the public opinion, as the parliamentarians of the governmental Right themselves acknowledge. They have, in fact, discredited themselves in the eyes of many anti-Macron right-wing voters.

The strategy of Les Républicains can thus be explained: if the motion of censure had succeeded, Emmanuel Macron would have retaliated [by dissolving the National Assembly](#). New legislative elections would have had to be organised, and everything suggests that the result would not have been in favour of the centre-right party. So they acted out of a survival reflex. But the consequence of this choice places them *de facto* ever closer to the Macronist majority, and ever further from a union of the Rights. For her part, Marine Le Pen explained a few moments before the vote “not to fear a dissolution.” And for good reason: she has everything to gain by concentrating opposition against Emmanuel Macron.

In the near future, Les Républicains may be able to play a key role by tabling their own censure motion in the next weeks which could gather both the NUPES and the RN. For the moment, though, they appear to be too weak for such a game, and not able to convince anyone of their political strategy—which is still not clear enough in their own eyes. “We are not ready,” Senator Bruno Retailleau, candidate for the presidency of the LR party, [had to admit](#).