

Government Orders

the striking down of those parts of a piece of legislation that attempted to do that.

I would say on that basis where we are fighting for the future of our country, one we hope will be better for our children and our children's children, that we should have as wide open a system as possible to enable people to participate. We should have a referendum wherein people are allowed to participate in unfettered ways, which respect not only the wording of our Constitution but the intent of our Constitution, to activate and maximize those democratic rights that lie at the heart of the entire system of government.

There can be a case made for recognizing associations and the bill attempts to do that. That was the purpose of some of the amendments, to say: "If you want to associate, if you want to spend beyond a certain amount and under another certain amount, associate, register, let us know who you are, where your money is coming from and how you are spending it". That is part of the bill.

However, to say to people: "There are only two groups you can belong to, that some unknown group with an unknown membership is going to be able to tell you whether or not you can participate the way you want in arguing for the future of your country" is to state the kind of principle I would hope this democratically elected institution would not uphold. If we were to make a mistake and uphold it at this point, I am sure that the courts of our land would strike it down as being an infringement that runs counter to the activation and the actualization of the democratic rights and the other rights in the Charter that deal with freedom of association and freedom of speech.

I simply wanted to make that point. I am sorry I was distracted by the rabbit tracks of how hard people were willing to work on behalf of their country. I would like to assure the nation that the members on this side of the House are always willing to be pleasant and work hard, whether they do it in their riding or in the House. They do it in some kind of balanced picture. I am in a position to know because of my position within the party. I doubt if there has ever been a harder working group of parliamentarians who participate more in the major decisions than exists in our party at this moment in history.

It has been a wide-open process from start to finish with a lot of information and a lot of chances to discuss

and influence and that is the way it should be. Any attempt by the Parliament of Canada to pass a piece of legislation that denies others in this country that opportunity to do likewise is a misguided piece of legislation and I would urge members not to support amendments that take us in that direction.

Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, I would like first to refer to a statement that was made by the premier of Alberta talking about referendums. I am going to quote him. The quote comes from a conference he attended at Alternatives '91 that was held in Banff, Alberta. I quote: "I have come to the conclusion that in the particular case of a Constitution as distinguished from a mandate for programs arising out of a specific election, I believe we have to have a referendum as ultimate ratification. What I want to impress upon you though, because I am a pragmatist and a westerner, is that it is very important when I think back to the constitutional negotiations of 1981, if you believe in the equality of provinces"—and I think this is the important thing he says—"the referendum has to be by province, not by region and not by simple national majority. We are a confederation".

• (1740)

This is why I believe the colleagues on my left are right. They are certainly not represented in this forum. They are not being allowed to participate in committees and they were not able to respond today to the minister of intergovernmental affairs.

As the member for Annapolis Valley—Hants said, it is important on a national referendum issue for the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, the leader of the New Democratic Party and the leader of the Bloc Quebecois to be able to express their feelings on the Constitution. They have not done so.

We have a bill before us on referendums. This bill is not a binding referendum. It is simply a polling of people. As has been asked before, why spend \$100 million on a referendum that is not binding? It is simply an indication of what people feel at a given moment and it is a very, very expensive poll. We should not proceed with an incomplete bill.

I introduced in the House two referendum bills that would have been binding on the federal government in its own jurisdiction. It should not go beyond the jurisdiction of the federal government because we are a federation of provinces and we have no jurisdiction to deal with