

tunity to participate in their own way within this wonderful country.

I could go along and say that if we do not consult all three parties we, in our own actions right here, become too partisan. We need a mechanism whereby the actual question has to be defined and it should be defined by all parties, first in a small committee in which it can be examined and made sure that it is properly weighted and easily understood. Everybody will know what the question means so that when we go into the debate on the issues we know clearly what we are talking about.

It is perhaps not germane to the issue but this House is well aware that in the last few weeks and over the last few years the Canadian Parliament and Canadian parliamentarians have been helping the European parliaments establish themselves.

I looked after the Hungarian group this time. Last time it was those who came from the Ukraine. The Hungarians asked all kinds of questions on how you run a democracy. How did they get a democracy? They had referenda. They expressed a point of view. They chose a way to live.

Now they have to learn how to apply that way to live.

What could be better than to come here? We are a democracy. We do have differences of opinion. We do exchange in a logical and, I hope, intelligent approach in the bigger picture, not to mention distinct society. We are distinct and some of us are more distinct than others, never mind language. What is so terrible if you speak one language, two languages, three languages, four is even better.

We may or may not reform the Senate, but for goodness' sake the bottom line is that this country is too precious and too well perceived by everyone around the world, by those who are knocking to get a visa to come in here, who want to immigrate to Canada. We are having an argument. Let us settle it once and for all. Let us learn how to respect our differences, never mind tolerate them. Let us respect them. Let us rejoice in them.

The diversity of this country is the strength. Our unity is what is important and also in the long run that Canadian people recognize how lucky they are and they will express their will to live together. We have to have a proper mechanism.

Government Orders

As this bill goes to committee to be adjusted, to be fixed in a sense so that it will be on a proper open and fair procedure, I hope that good judgment on the part of this government will recognize the very serious responsibility it has and meet the concerns of all sides and many of the backbenchers, even on the government side, particularly around spending limits, advertising procedures and regional double majorities. The whole process needs to be tightened up.

As a Quebecker, as an Yvette, I do not want to have to see the breaking up of family ties and the bitterness that stays for much too long. This question is one we can discuss in an agreeable way. We do not have to be disagreeable. We can exchange on these differences but give us the mechanism and the tools to do it fairly, openly, tolerantly. It should always be perceived as such.

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have a chance to speak, even if only for 10 minutes, on Bill C-81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada.

• (1250)

This is a complicated bill. There are many details in it and there are also many flaws in it. The biggest flaw probably has been the lack of consultation between the government and the parties, that is, the consultation which broke down just in the last stage of the process when this bill was being drafted and when certain matters were overlooked. They were presumably not left out deliberately.

My NDP colleagues have touched on several of those already and I wish to concentrate on only three. The first flaw that I wish to mention is the lack of the double majority principle. This was the principle that was agreed to by all parties unanimously in the report that was tabled last June from Beaudoin-Edwards.

I quote from *Hansard*, page 10848:

We recommend that a federal law be enacted to enable the federal government at its discretion to hold a consultative referendum on a constitutional proposal whether to confirm the existence of a national consensus or to facilitate the adoption of the required amending resolution.

This is the next part that I wish particularly to point out to the people of Canada. It was agreed further that:

The referendum should require a national majority and a majority each in the four regions—Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario and the west.