

Government Orders

tion back to the people of Canada. We need to have this great day when Canadians need to say yes to this country remaining together and to enter into the 21st century. That is exactly what we want to do.

I want to say today, because it is very important, that there is an element of using the referendum to pressure people. That has never been the intention. The intention was to consult the people of Canada and let them decide what the Constitution of our land should be and legitimize the process. I am confident that when the people of Canada realize that, they will be confident and will gain back the pride that they have lost through these terrible last seven years.

We do not want the government to use it as an instrument to push people around, but to give a voice to the people of Canada for a new Constitution.

I do not like what the government is doing in terms of what it is going to do when it has a referendum. It should be very clear that we should not proceed with any change in the Constitution if one of the four great regions of Canada says no to this package or any package. It has to be clear that the Constitution will not be changed. Nobody can force us. We can say as a matter of policy of this House that if Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Ontario or the west says no, then we are not proceeding. It should be very clear that this is the way it should be in a country as diversified as ours. It is as simple as that.

We are disappointed with some elements of the bill. We think that the government could have accepted many of the amendments that we made, but we will vote for the bill even in its imperfection. I do not understand the position of those in the NDP. They do not want to consult the people of Canada because they do not like the car that is going there. They say they are going in Cadillacs or they are not going at all. I find that stupid because I am willing to walk for this country if need be.

I am not happy. We made some suggestions. I think we should regroup the people. I know that when we have a referendum we will have an umbrella because I am willing to fight for Canada with the Conservative Party and the NDP Party and we will be together on the same platform. It is not that bad. I have done it before. I was on the same platform as the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs in Shawinigan for the last referendum.

An hon. member: Oh my God.

Mr. Chrétien: It was not that bad. I was with the Minister of National Defence. Imagine that.

Some hon. members: Oh no.

Mr. Chrétien: In those days he was not arriving in his jet. He walked there. It is not that bad because it is a great cause.

We will do that. We will be together and we will fight for Canada because we believe in it.

We hear the noisemaker from Shefford over there. Yesterday he was so indecent. He would still be in his boat in the Magdalen Islands if the member for Papineau had not been his mentor and given him a chance to be a member of Parliament. At least he should have a bit of decency and respect. That is the reason why I was mad. He should have some respect for the member for Papineau.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, I have no lesson to learn from the Leader of the Opposition on the friendship and respect I have for the member for Papineau—Saint-Michel. My friendship and respect have been constant. We may have different political opinions but still respect each other.

[*English*]

Mr. Chrétien: I do not have time to spend with this member. I just made a point and I think that he understood that. I am glad that he says that he has respect for the member from Papineau. I do too. It would have been very nice yesterday to let him finish his speech without making the nonsensical noise that he made.

We will have this referendum and we want it. Whatever happens there will be a referendum. We want all Canadians to be consulted. I do not understand people who say that the legitimate Government of Canada and Parliament of Canada, that have been acting under one Constitution since 1867, suddenly in the words of the Bloc Québécois—

[*Translation*]

—would not have the right to consult the citizens of Quebec. This is a referendum for all Canadians. The best proof that members of the Bloc Québécois are Canadians is that they are here in this House. Why would they not want Quebecers to be consulted in the same way as Ontarians and residents of the Northwest Territories? Why would they not want all Canadians to say yes or no? That is democracy. Democracy must not