

**Mr. Plamondon:** What did he say about the Canada-wide referendum? Madam Speaker, this is what he said on January 31, 1979:

Members from Quebec, in particular the Minister of Communications (Mrs. Sauvé), urged members of the House to support the government in its endeavour to acquire this repressive tool because she felt the danger which is upon us. I was sorry to see her lack of trust in the decision that Quebecers will be making, and I think that she has acknowledged her party's failure to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of a province and meet the objectives of a majority of Quebecers as well as all Canadians, who would want to see, in this constitutional reform, a chance to secure an interesting future for all concerned.

He condemned it, he got up, he spoke, he defended Quebec's higher interests. The hon. member for Joliette added:

—the federal government [the Liberal government of that time] considers it essential to pass a law to oppose a possible decision by a majority of Quebecers.

History is repeating itself. Why a referendum? To interfere with the democratic process embarked upon following the failure of Meech, with the Bélanger-Campeau Commission and Bill 150 which will give us a referendum on the real issue: do you want Quebec to be a sovereign state or not?

• (1720)

With its Canada-wide referendum, this government, a government incapable of tabling proposals, incapable of carrying out its duty, incapable of uniting its federalist forces, incapable of making offers, will interfere with that process, as democratic and fair as it is, and with the reflection undertaken by the people of Quebec which will lead to a referendum to be held in the fall.

They are afraid. And not only are they putting forward an act providing for a Canada-wide referendum, but this act is totally devoid of the democratic virtues and the respect for citizens that one would expect from any referendum act, as is the case all over the world. As the hon. House leader said, they are going to try and buy votes by spending millions on publicity. It has already started, with the Canada 125 advertisements we are seeing on the tube, often using very debatable statements such as Canada presumably being number one, very debatable statements indeed. Millions would also be spent during the limitless referendum. Can you imagine a less moral, less acceptable act of democracy than dipping into the public purse—what am I saying?—rather

adding to the national debt, because the purse is empty.

**An hon. member:** Taking money from Quebec.

**Mr. Plamondon:** They are spending tons of money, including money from Quebec. All that money squandered. Such an immoral act is unheard of in the western world.

Today, instead of debating the amendments put forward to limit expenditures—and this happens to be one of them—they will not even take part in the debate. So much for democracy! How undemocratic! What sort of democracy has this country become? It had a great track record as far as following the British parliamentary system was concerned.

We are turning our backs on our entire democratic history by spending millions in an attempt to buy public support. Why not have a yes umbrella and a no umbrella like they had in England for the referendum on whether or not they should join the Common Market and in Quebec as well?

What would we have called Quebec if there had not been a yes umbrella and a no umbrella in the 1980 referendum, if it had failed to provide a start-up grant to both and had spent money through its 39 ministries to convince the public to vote "yes"? We would have called Quebec undemocratic. We would have called it fascist. We would have compared it to the government of South Africa.

But that was not the case. Quebec did respect the principles and the values of democracy. If the Canadian charter prevents you from limiting expenditures, tear it up. It is no good. A charter that does not allow you to prevent millions from being spent in a limitless referendum is no good and should be amended. In closing, Madam Speaker, I condemn both the limit put on this debate and this horrible waste of money to have a referendum which will solve nothing as the hon. member for Joliette said in 1979.

**Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary-West):** It is interesting to listen to the members of this House. The hon. member mentioned the fact that some members of the Conservative Party were not participating in this debate. but he fails to mention that over the course of the past year, he worked in this House a total of five, perhaps six days. In our party, all members get to speak, all members work seven days—