

the Prime Minister was another plague on this House. The one benefit that television brought is that we could see clearly the collective ennui in the faces of government supporters as they listened to what the Prime Minister had to say, or not to say.

I recognize that the only cabinet minister who had the fortitude to sit for the whole length of that address was the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan). I can understand why he possessed that kind of fortitude; he is used to speeches of that kind because he reads his own. It is too bad we had to be harangued in that way and listen to the kind of statement the Prime Minister made. Out of what was said in those two hours we got two statements, one where the Prime Minister, to use his own words, scooped the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) on the announcement of the \$150 million make-work program, and the other when he scooped not only the Minister of Finance but the entire cabinet on the question of the referendum. I say this because, as it became evident during the question period yesterday, the entire cabinet knew nothing about that particular proposal. But there are certain problems inherent in that proposal for a referendum. The Prime Minister has problems with members of his own caucus.

A year ago we were debating the Speech from the Throne, as we are now, and I recall that the hon. member for Lafontaine-Rosemont (Mr. Lachance) was the member who moved the address in reply. Today I looked up *Hansard* and could not help but be amused by what the Prime Minister had said by way of a compliment to that hon. member. He complimented the hon. member for Lafontaine-Rosemont and his colleague for the eloquence with which they had spoken, and went on to say—

The presence of such outstanding young men among us demonstrates the ever renewed vitality of the House of Commons as well as its ability to reflect the varied regional and cultural concerns of Canadians.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Friesen: That was on October 30. One month later, on November 15, *Hansard* records the remarks of the same member, the hon. member for Lafontaine-Rosemont. It so happens that the day before I had presented a motion to the House asking that a referendum be held on the subject of capital punishment. The Prime Minister had already spoken of him as a very intelligent young man who added vitality to the House. Now let me read the remarks the hon. member for Lafontaine-Rosemont made regarding a referendum. He said, and I quote from page 1003 of *Hansard* for November 15, 1976:

I do not think it would be appropriate to use such a dangerous tool because a referendum is very dangerous. It can divide a population into two factions and afterwards it is extremely difficult to heal the wounds.

I trust that all the members from Quebec will keep in mind what the hon. member for Lafontaine-Rosemont said a year ago on the subject of a referendum.

Mr. Roberts: Does not an election do the same?

Mr. Friesen: The Secretary of State (Mr. Roberts) wants to respond. He has already presented himself to the House as an

The Address—Mr. Friesen

authority on sex and reproduction, and we find all kinds of examples of his philosophy on Yonge Street in Toronto. He would be better advised to keep to the subject of broadcasting and assistance to the arts rather than talk about sex.

The hon. member for Lafontaine-Rosemont went on to say, as reported on the same page:

Without that experience, and on such a touchy subject as that one, it is inadvisable to experiment. I am not ready to tackle that adventure. Why not? I will tell you right now. The idea of a referendum is not a new one. In Quebec we know what they are because people have been talking about them for some six years, now.

He went on to say:

The real concerns of Quebecers are shelved. Economic problems, consumer issues, problems relating to industry, fishing, transportation, all that is thrown to the basket because what is important is the referendum, the basic option: people voted in 1970, in 1973 and again in 1976 for or against that option.

He went on to say as reported at page 1004:

Mr. Speaker, a referendum is dangerous . . . It is serious, and when 22 million people are involved, experiments are out of the question . . . I do not want any referendum but still less on the occasion of an election, because then you have the situation we are witnessing in Quebec: People do not have any choice; they no longer vote for a party, they no longer vote for ideas, they vote for an option, Mr. Speaker.

● (1552)

And what happens over the years? In the case of the province of Quebec, this creates dissensions, factions, and the province can no longer operate with factions. And if factions are created in Canada on the basis of the results of such a referendum, or of one option, or another, Mr. Speaker, there is no room for Canada in the world.

Those are the remarks of the hon. member for Lafontaine over a year ago on the very day of the election in the province of Quebec. His remarks were followed by those of the hon. member who is chairman of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs, the hon. member for Windsor-Walkerville (Mr. MacGuigan). We know he is an esteemed lawyer who knows the law. I recall very vividly his taking me to task about the word "referendum". He gave me quite a little lecture on what is a referendum and what is a plebiscite. As reported at page 1005 of *Hansard* for that day he said this:

I find it hard to understand that hon. members could rise in this House and urge us to change our whole parliamentary system merely because they are not satisfied with a particular vote.

Those are the words of a supporter of the Prime Minister who, two days ago, suggested that we should hold a referendum. The hon. member went on to say:

If we were to have a referendum, it would have to be followed by an act of parliament, with the members of parliament being bound by the referendum not having the right to vote independently on the issue. In effect, they would be bound by something that happened outside this House, and that would be destructive of the whole parliamentary system.

That is what the Prime Minister is suggesting, Mr. Speaker, and I am waiting to see how the hon. member for Windsor-Walkerville will vote if that measure ever comes to the floor of the House. Certainly I will be watching how the hon. member for Lafontaine will vote if the measure comes to floor of the House.

Mr. Blais: You are comparing apples and oranges.