

*Oral Questions***QUEBEC REFERENDUM**

**Mr. Nick Discepola (Vaudreuil, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last Thursday, we heard the news that the Bloc Québécois will not accept as final a no vote in the referendum. The Leader of the Opposition said it in so many words: "It is a non ending issue as long as it would not be resolved by a yes".

Please allow an English speaking Quebecer to teach some French to Mr. Bouchard. The Robert dictionary says—

[English]

**The Speaker:** I would ask hon. members to refer to each other by the names of their ridings. I will permit the member to continue.

[Translation]

**Mr. Discepola:** Please allow me to suggest that the Leader of the Opposition check in the Robert dictionary, which says that no is a negative adverb expressing a negative answer or refusal. It certainly does not mean "maybe", "some other time" or "next time".

Will we ever be done with the "indépendantistes"? They generate this economic instability and they are really costing us.

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

[Translation]

**QUEBEC REFERENDUM**

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, last year, Quebecers elected a sovereigntist government with a mandate to hold a referendum as soon as possible on Quebec's accession to sovereignty.

Acting on its electoral promise, the government presided by Jacques Parizeau triggered the referendum mechanism in the National Assembly.

Recently, the Minister of Labour and federal minister responsible for the Quebec referendum was called to order by the Prime Minister for having said, and I quote: "We have always said that Quebecers had the right to express themselves on the future of Quebec, either within or outside Canada. We live in a democratic country, so we will respect the vote—".

My question is directed to the Prime Minister: What was so wrong about the minister's statement, which reflected the most elementary principles of democracy, that would justify the humiliating retraction he inflicted on her?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Quebecers will be able to express their opinion on October 30 in a referendum.

As far as I am concerned, the country has other problems to deal with as well, and I will not spend my time answering hypothetical questions from the Leader of the Opposition who says that if it is yes, it is yes, and if it is no, it is not the right answer.

So I do not need any lessons from him.

**Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice):** I will be able to answer the Leader of the Opposition if he tells me if it is supposed to be a play-off, two out of three, three out of five or four out of seven.

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I think someone put on the wrong record, because the question was about whether the Prime Minister could tell us why he called his minister to order.

I would like to ask him whether we are to understand that taking the same line he took with his minister, he also intends to call to order the chairman of the No Committee, Daniel Johnson, who last Tuesday in Quebec City recognized the right of Quebecers to decide on their future and promised to respect their decision.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have always said they had the right to have a referendum in Quebec. Quebecers can be consulted and can explain their point of view.

• (1420)

However, we on this side of the House are convinced that Quebecers, if they are asked an honest question about the separation of Quebec from Canada, not a trick question, no clever twists and turns but an honest question: Do you want to separate from Canada? If the leader of the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Parizeau, was truly intellectually honest, he would have asked Quebecers: Do you want to separate? And Quebecers would have answered: No, never.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, with respect, I deplore the fact that at the very beginning of this fundamental debate, we are hearing applause for a prime minister who has just impugned the intellectual honesty of Mr. Jacques Parizeau, who certainly does not need lessons from this prime minister.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Bouchard:** If I understood the Prime Minister's answer correctly, he sees the outcome of this referendum merely as a point of view to be expressed by the people of Quebec. I think we should consider this from the legal point of view, and I may remind the Prime Minister that the National Assembly and the