

The Address

referendum, such as the rights of aboriginal people who make up five or six per cent of the population. An amendment to the Constitution may be one that deals strictly with their treaty rights or deals with land entitlement or deals with self-government. Should that be put to a national referendum?

There could be a tyranny of the majority, trampling over minority rights. The same is true of rights of multiracial or multicultural minorities. I raise those as questions that are legitimate. There are also questions about the financing of a referendum, do we have limitations on the yes and no side, who will ask the question and why.

The important thing for me is that we involve the people in the process from the beginning through a constituent assembly and through very open public hearings at both the federal and provincial levels so that people participate in building the process and building the Constitution.

There may be a place at the end for a national referendum, but only a national referendum that unites Canada, binds us together and not divides us. All I am saying is that we have to look at it more closely. I think it requires a bit more study.

Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt): Mr. Speaker, there are those of us who came to this country as immigrants, there are those of us who chose Canada. We could have gone to any country in the world. However, we chose Canada. We are very disturbed by some people who are trying to divide the country, the separatists from Quebec and the separatists from the west.

My question for the hon. member is the following: Will he agree that we have to invite the ethno-Canadians? Will he agree that multiculturalism has played a definite part in this country. Yesterday, the first Sikh graduated from RCMP training wearing a turban. Will he agree that ethnocultural Canadians should sit at the negotiating table and start negotiating, that these people who come to this country by choice and are sick and tired of the separatist factions of this country are needed and needed today?

I speak about my hon. friends from Quebec. We came here by choice and we do not want any part of what they are saying.

Mr. Nystrom: I obviously agree that ethnocultural Canadians have to be at the table. That is a major reason why we have recommended a constituent assembly. My friend from the Liberal Party's leader, if I can be a bit partisan here for a second, has rejected the idea of a constituent assembly. I think if one were to reject the idea, I would be hard pressed to figure out a way to bring the people who are under-represented in our parliamentary system to the table in the numbers that they should.

That is why we recommend a constituent assembly. It is easier to have the linguistic minorities, the ethnocultural Canadians, people with multiracial backgrounds and the aboriginal people at the table if there is a constituent assembly.

It is the reason why I hesitate about a national referendum. Minority rights can be overridden by the majority. I think not just of aboriginal people but people from other minorities.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr Speaker, some called us separatists earlier. Perhaps you will be proud in a few years to learn that we saved the rest of Canada because we wanted sovereignty for Quebec.

• (1710)

Because of the way things are going right now, this country is heading straight into bankruptcy. The deficit is now \$400 billions and we don't know how to solve this problem. I would like only to say that you are going to be proud to see perhaps one day a sovereign Canada, formed of the rest of Canada, that will be able to grow better than it is today.

I would have a short question for the hon. member who just spoke. We talked earlier about unity. He spoke a lot about unity. In the Speech from the Throne, the government said that education should be under its jurisdiction and that we should have a legislation providing us with a national policy on education when we know