

*Government Orders*

There must be spending limits on the campaign. Average Canadians will not accept the fact that their voice will not be equal to the voice of the wealthy and the powerful. They will not accept the fact that because they do not have hundreds and thousands of dollars to spend they are not equal to the wealthy, to the multinational corporations, to big business and big organizations. Therefore there must be spending limits.

• (1610)

The average Canadian wants to know this referendum is not going to be bought but it is going to be honestly debated on an equal footing.

There must be an interpretation of the results of the referendum that every Canadian knows is fair and honest. They must know that before they start participating. They must understand if we in western Canada vote yes it has some significance. We not going to be simply ignored by the Prime Minister. Those in Atlantic Canada have the same commitment as do those in central Canada and Quebec. All Canadians in every region must support this interpretation.

There must a feeling of fairness and openness in the drafting of the question. That is why we are insisting on an all-party committee that jointly drafts the question. If Canadians feel this is another one of the manipulations of the Prime Minister and if he puts a question they do not believe is a fair, open and honest question, the backlash against this government and against Canada could do irreparable harm. In fact, it could destroy Canada at the very opportunity when we have a chance to unite the country.

Dealing with the whole question of the campaign, it must be viewed by Canadians as fair. We should take the opportunity to incorporate some of the proposals made by the electoral reform commission and properly define electoral expenses so that people cannot do polling that is not considered an expense, so that people cannot use volunteers, slick advertisers and marketing people and say they are not an election expense, so that there is a proper enumeration, particularly in my riding of Surrey North which is the fastest growing riding in Canada with 10,000 additional households. People must be assured that it is fair.

In closing let me say that we support the idea of a referendum. Unless it is a fair, honest and open referen-

dum it is going to destroy Canada rather than unite Canada.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** I regret that I could not give the hon. member more time. That is what happens in this place when you are having fun.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. François Gérin (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead):** Mr. Speaker, I am telling you nothing new when I say that Canadians and Quebecers no longer have any confidence in this government. Because they no longer believe in this government, they will not play this phony game that is being proposed to them to solve the constitutional problem.

I recall that two years ago that I no longer believed in this government. I no longer had any confidence in the ability of this government to act honestly, openly and credibly and I gladly and proudly quit the Conservative caucus.

I left it because, as I told you then, this government had lied to the people since 1984 by saying, for example, that it would reduce the deficit to zero, when in fact it doubled it and that it would solve the constitutional problem in a way that Quebec could come back with honour and enthusiasm. Obviously that was false. It broke that commitment in May or June 1990, although it had said that it would make a very big effort, not just any effort, a very great effort to make all our institutions more democratic. I honestly took it at its word. I believed that the government was telling the truth.

In August 1988, just before the election campaign, the Prime Minister said: that he supported the principle of popular financing for political parties. He added: "The example of Quebec, where citizens finance political parties, is good for democracy and it is the way it should be." Four days before the election, on November 17, 1988, the big headline of the day on the front page of *La Presse* was: Mulroney promises popular financing of political parties. He said: "It is unthinkable to finance an election," and the same goes for a referendum, "with big corporations and unions to the detriment of ordinary citizens, because it unbalances the whole process". The promises he made from 1984 to 1988 got him 63 seats from Quebec in the 1988 election, including my seat in Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead.