

*Government Orders*

A double majority which in effect demands that the referendum succeed in all four regions of the country will eliminate that fear of great division. We all know that Quebecers see themselves as a minority in Canada. Certainly they see themselves as a minority in North America and they do not want to see their rights and their aspirations and their hopes trampled upon and dashed by the majority.

The same thing is felt in western Canada, the region I come from. Western Canadians see this as a Canada round and they feel that they have a stake in any constitutional change, but they want to be consulted directly. They want a say in this and the full say they are asking for can only be obtained if there is a double majority. After all, there is a possibility that the question may be written in such a way that westerners will take one viewpoint, they will take one opinion on the question, whereas other Canadians, from Ontario, Atlantic Canada or Quebec will take another view.

Therefore it seems to me for a referendum to truly succeed, to truly have validity, to truly have credibility, there must be what we call a provision for a double majority. It must succeed in the west. It must succeed in Ontario. It must succeed in Quebec. It must succeed in Atlantic Canada.

According to news reports I have heard in the last 24 hours, the government is not prepared to amend the legislation before us in such a way as to provide for a double majority. I think that would be a mistake and I hope the government will reconsider its position with respect to double majority and look at this again very seriously. Canadians are demanding that kind of protection and that kind of insurance.

The other concern I have has to do with spending limits. Again, based on news reports, apparently the House leader of the government is entertaining some different thoughts and is, perhaps, prepared to amend the legislation to put some control on spending limits. I think it is absolutely essential that there be spending limits.

To have the legislation seen as being fair there has to be spending limits. If the sky is the limit there is naturally favouritism toward the rich, toward people with money. People with money in a process where the sky is the limit

will have no constraints, none whatsoever. They will be able to spend anything, all the money that they would want, while ordinary people of ordinary means will be constrained by their limited finances.

• (1230)

I believe it will make people feel that they have been treated unfairly, that the legislation has been essentially unfair and so spending limits are absolutely essential. Again I would urge the government to look at that.

We support the principle of the bill but it needs a lot of work.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Benoît Tremblay (Rosemont):** Mr. Speaker, at this very moment, while we are discussing Bill C-81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada, the Canadian constitutional circus caravan is parked in Montreal, we see the actors going around in circles without getting anywhere on the substance of the issues.

We get the impression that only one thing is moving and that is the caravan itself which travels from city to city across Canada, spending millions of dollars just to realize, time and time again, it has reached an impasse.

Five Canadian provinces chose Montreal to take a joint stand on making a Triple-E Senate an absolute-condition for any constitutional agreement. That is where we are now, with all our efforts to bring Quebec back into the Constitution with honour and enthusiasm.

Quebec's minimum demands have been rejected: no veto, no assurances on Supreme Court appointments. As for the fundamental issue of Quebec's development instruments to be discussed during the second round, there has been no time yet to consider the matter, although the deadline is only two weeks away.

What are the consequences for Quebec? As far as constitutional guarantees are concerned, Quebec has no assurances that in the long run it will be able to maintain its influence within our federal institutions. As far as the division of powers is concerned we are denied the tools we need to maintain our identity and provide for our development. These results were entirely predictable and inevitable when we consider the events in this country that led to the demise of Meech Lake.