

Is there a solution to it? The hon. House leader on the government side indicated there is a preponderance of legal opinion which indicates that any limitation in the number of committees, the amount of money that might be spent, will be seen as a contravention of the charter. That is not ambiguously so. There still exists a difference of opinion.

I believe the principle is correct that there should be spending limits. I believe there is reason in a limitation of the pro and the con to two committees. I believe that strongly. If that is so, then we have included in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms a principle that all around me I have heard defended when we have pleaded that equality in the charter should be absolute.

We have heard a quick defence of the notwithstanding clause, a defence for no other reason than to ensure inequality. But we have not heard a mention of the application of the notwithstanding clause to ensure that the democratic process as expressed by a referendum would work. I find that strange.

In the absence of a Supreme Court decision that might be gotten by reference or in the absence of an appropriate decision and therefore the application of the notwithstanding clause to ensure fairness, what we will have is not an expression of democracy, but an expression of the power of some to mislead the many and lead them down a garden path. It is not exclusively with respect to the constitutional proposal but in respect to any notion this government or any other might put to a referendum as an excuse for not making the kind of decisions we are elected to make.

I want to emphasize to the people that are watching this debate, look out. Do not be fooled. When that 30-page document comes out which constitutes the constitutional proposal and you are asked to vote yes or no, you had better watch the fine print because this government is like a used car salesman, the fine print is what could kill the country and we had better watch out for that.

Mr. Pat Sobeski (Cambridge): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand and speak on Bill C-81. I was one of the members of the committee last week when the House was in recess who came back and reviewed the bill in committee. I would like to say a few words about the

element of fairness in this debate that is going on here today. During my 10 minutes, I will probably comment on some of the debate that took place in committee.

• (1800)

I am concerned about the rights of individual Canadians. How does the individual Canadian participate in this referendum, if it ever comes to a referendum? Many will write letters to the editors and many will knock on doors. There are many ways that people can participate indirectly and not spend any money that is recorded.

However, how about an individual who feels strongly about Canada and decides that he or she would like to put a small ad in the local newspaper expressing how he or she feels about Canada. They place one, two or three ads. In many small weeklies across Canada the bill might come to \$200.

What is wrong with that? What is wrong with thousands of individual Canadians wanting to participate that way? Yet we have heard through the process that somehow this is wrong, it should not be allowed to take place and that there should be rules that if you want to place an ad maybe you have to go under an umbrella committee.

It is important that individual Canadians would have an opportunity to express his or her view openly and not have to worry about regulations.

The legislation states that if over \$5,000 is spent, there should be some transparency. Therefore, I am sure in communities across this nation we will see service clubs deciding they would like to do something as a group of 40 women or 70 men. Any organization can get involved in its own way during this referendum campaign which, if it is required, would be less than five weeks in duration. But if it decides it is going to spend over \$5,000, it would then have to register as a referendum committee.

Once an organization registers, a tremendous amount of transparency must take place. It must then indicate if it has had people donating over \$250 and then register their names. It must indicate its source of funds. It must then list down its expenses. It must appoint someone to be its financial officer or auditor and it has to have its books audited. This is all controlled by the Chief Electoral Officer. The committee must be registered. There are numerous regulations that have been put in place. There