

We know referendum is not even a proper term. People have said referendum means it is binding and when the people vote the government has to respect their wishes.

This government is not saying that. You know the government is not saying that. This government says it wants to hear from the people, but we have no guarantee whatsoever this government will actually listen and act as the people want.

This government is scornful of popular will. This government did not want a referendum, it wanted a plebiscite. You know the difference between plebiscite and referendum; it is not binding. This is not binding.

My party wants a referendum. We want a fair referendum. I was on the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee. The government members know I was and I tried to participate in a positive way. I was fully aware of the fact that even a Liberal member said there had to be a control on the expenses and a double majority.

Then we had Beaudoin-Edwards which said the same thing. Then we had Beaudoin-Dobbie. I served proudly on that committee and tried to be positive. It said we should have control of these expenses and we should have a referendum which is binding, but it is not.

I am disappointed in this bill but I am really disappointed in this debate. This is not a debate at a level ordinary Canadians are going to find relevant. This is a debate we have heard for the past several days where each side of the House is calling the other side traitors, prostitutes, and selling out the country. I do not believe that.

I do not agree with the government but I do not believe this bill is illegitimate. I do not agree with the government but I do not believe certain members did not work as hard as they could, particularly members from Quebec. I know my friend, the hon. member from Jonquière, has done a commendable job trying to change this bill. He has my admiration and he is a member of the government side.

Some people say if you are against the referendum you are against Canada and you do not want to put any faith in the people. I issue a challenge today to the government members. If you really believe in going to the people, I challenge you. Take the GST to a referendum.

Government Orders

Let us hear the people speak about the GST and bind yourselves to the GST, number one. Let me give you another example.

Mr. McDermid: What about capital punishment?

Mr. Edmonston: We will get to capital punishment but let me get to my speech because I asked the question and I am sure you will respond.

Second, if you believe in the will of the people, the people are up there in the gallery, the people who are listening to us, and those watching on television, if you believe in referendums, if you believe in liberty and democracy, take the free trade deal and put it into a referendum.

Mr. McDermid: We did. It was called the 1988 election.

Mr. Edmonston: A referendum. Listen to the people.

If you believe the people are equal and everyone has the same voice, why not control expenses?

• (1640)

Everyone has the same voice. Why not control expenses? What is this deal about 56 cents per person, \$5 million or \$8 million limit on as many committees as you want? Is that really the way to go? Even people in your own party say: "Come on, get smart, this is not what we need".

I can have admiration for members from any political party because I listen to what they say and I listen to the logic of what they say. I have listened to the Liberals and I have listened to the Conservatives. I disagree with the Conservatives. I disagree with the Liberals. I think the lack of this protection of a double majority and a lack of protection for the expenses are imperfect and are flaws that go to the heart of this bill.

That is really a difference between us and other members of the government and the Liberal Party. I know many Liberal Party members are very unhappy because they want it. I remember my good friend, the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel saying: "We have to have this. This double majority is very important". That is one of the reasons we signed on Beaudoin-Dobbie, but you did not get it.

Is it enough not to have this particular tool? Is there an urgency right now for this referendum which is not binding? I do not think there is any urgency at all.