

• (1550)

At this juncture I would like to mention the efforts of two Canadian scientists, Dr. Jon Gerrard, a professor of paediatrics at the University of Manitoba Faculty of Medicine, and Dr. Jean-Pierre Despres, a professor at the University of Laval in Quebec City. These two scientists, along with 2,200 others from coast to coast, have signed petitions for a unified country. These scientists come from different cultures and speak different languages and yet they see the need for Canadian unity to ensure the future of science and education in Canada and thereby ensure the future of Canada itself.

Let me quote from the resolution our Canadian scientists have asked me to table in this House:

Be it resolved that we as Canadians rededicate ourselves to a renewed spirit of co-operation, to build a nation where tolerance, diversity and caring for others are hallmarks.

Let this spirit of co-operation to build a renewed nation begin in this House today. Let us have the courage to consult with all Canadians. Let us, the elected representatives of the people, irrespective of political stripes, listen to their will and understand their hearts and minds. It has been said *salus populi suprema lex est*, the will of the people is the supreme law. Indeed the foundation of a nation is will as I said in the beginning.

I believe Canadians have the will to hold their country tight, to keep it from breaking. Do we have the will in Parliament to let them show their love for this land? I pray to God we do, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I know there are many members who would like to make questions and comments on that excellent speech of my hon. friend from Winnipeg who truly demonstrates a patriotism that many of us could well emulate.

I want to ask him one question and make one comment. I will do the comment first.

Mr. Prud'homme: Short.

Government Orders

Mr. Edwards: Very short. I know my friend from Saint-Denis is anxious and I will be quick.

The comment that I have is concerning the government's participation in the referendum campaign. I just want to put on the record that if the government chooses to contribute to a registered referendum committee, that contribution will be reported by that committee. This is something of an elaboration on the comments of the Minister of Labour earlier today.

The bill does not affect the government's ability to carry on its business during a referendum campaign. Any government spending on the referendum would of course be subject to the usual scrutiny of all government spending. Governments of course are accountable. Finally, this bill of course does not authorize any expenditures other than those necessary on the part of the Chief Electoral Officer. There are no other expenditures authorized such as advertising or promotion expenditures. Anything like that would have to be voted on of course by Parliament.

My question for the hon. member has this point. The hon. member may have heard earlier today in Question Period our colleague from Kitchener put a question to the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs having to do with the proposed preamble to the Constitution which the joint committee recommended. I know that my friend has just demonstrated that he has a great love for fine language. I am wondering whether he himself is in support of the proposed preamble and whether he would do his share to see that it is incorporated in our final constitutional document.

While I am on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if there is consent for the following motion:

That four members and two staff of the Subcommittee on Acid Raid of the Standing Committee on Environment be permitted to travel to Washington, D.C., June 16 to 18, 1992, in relation to its study on Canada-United States acid raid reduction programs

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. It is not in the rules to table motions between comments and questions. I would prefer that that period expire before putting such a motion. I would ask the parliamentary secretary to wait.