

Government Orders

will cost at the very least between \$5 and \$6 million to the Quebec taxpayers. And this commission will deal with a biased bill in which only one option is considered, it being, of course, the separation of Quebec, the option advocated by the Parti Québécois as well as all the members of the Bloc Québécois in this place.

The problem with these people is that, basically, fundamentally, they are not there to serve the interests of the taxpayers and the people of Quebec, but the very narrow interests of a group of people with one political purpose in mind, namely the separation of Quebec.

I for one am convinced that the step we are taking with this bill, the policies put forward by this government, will show the people of Canada and Quebec that you can go a long way with a government who has vision, a government intent on building. In that context, I am convinced that, in the referendum, the people of Quebec will tell the separatists that they have had enough of this squandering of public funds and, from now on, that they want their political leaders to deal with real problems and help improve the standard of living in Quebec and build a better Quebec as part of what I might call the Canadian coalition, as part of the Canadian federation.

Coalitions, huge trade zones are the way of the future, and Quebec wants to be a part of this. The people of Quebec are very broad-minded. They will never stand for the narrow and obtuse view represented by separation, because it is not in their interests.

This being said, let me tell you again, Mr. Speaker, how proud I am to join in the minister's efforts in support of this bill which is basically aimed at the renewal of federal administration and government.

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised but when we know how the member who spoke before me is out of touch with Quebec reality, his vision of things should not come as a big surprise.

I wish to remind him that the government which, according to him, does not meet people's expectations was elected by 45 per cent of voters on September 12, 1994, that it was committed to holding a referendum on sovereignty and that even the Prime Minister wanted this referendum to be held as soon as possible.

Of course, when we look at the democratic process under way in Quebec from his perspective, no nation in the world is currently undergoing such a process in order to define itself, to say how it wants to prepare for the 21st century. Of course, that is not consistent with the centralizing vision of the government, which thinks that the truth can be found only in Ottawa, and we can see the results.

These results include the Axworthy reform, which required a five-week tour of Canada so that people could say time and again to the Liberal majority that a two-level UI system did not make sense. This required five weeks of consultations across Canada. I think that people throughout Quebec should have their say on how Quebec should define itself as a country. People are currently participating in all the different commissions.

People are flocking to say what kind of Quebec they want, to express their agreement with the bill tabled by the Quebec government, to say that Quebec belongs to them and that they have the right to define it as they see fit.

As for his opinion that coalitions are the way of the future, he should keep in mind that 28 new countries have joined the UN in the last 10 years and that, with free trade, it is no longer necessary to be a large political entity to reach major markets.

• (1605)

Small countries can have access to large economic markets and do very well on international markets.

It is not true that countries must be very big to hold their own in the new global economy. This theory is not consistent with current reality.

If, instead of holding a forum on health care without inviting the provinces, instead of using their majority to set aside a proposal to hear provincial authorities during the Axworthy reform hearings, the Liberal government had decided to hold real consultations while respecting the structure and jurisdiction of each level of government, we would have ended up with a much more democratic process, as the Quebec government's current process will be.

Mr. Cauchon: Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that the remarks of my colleague from the Bloc Québécois do not surprise me either. He says that I am out of touch with reality. The members of the Bloc are welcome to look at my schedule to see who spent the most time in Quebec.

I can assure you that no member of the Bloc Québécois was more present in Quebec than I was during the past year.

My honourable colleague from the Bloc wants to teach me a thing or two about democracy. He should start by looking at the actions of the Parizeau government in Quebec to see how democracy can be distorted, to see the shameful things that are taking place in Quebec as we speak. A democracy in shackles, Mr. Speaker!

In order to present the whole picture, Mr. Johnson's party asked for permission to distribute information pamphlets using government facilities. It was refused. And they call this democracy, they who use their majority to go ahead with commissions, the sole purpose of which is to secure Quebec's separation, by