

Government Orders

"Never, he said, would I accept to be afraid of the good judgement of Quebecers in their own referendum." Let us trust the people of Quebec, he said in that speech. Here is the truth. This is my first question and I would appreciate your comments.

The second one concerns the fact that you said that an unworthy law was better than no law at all. This is terrible. Here is a repugnant, immoral bill, without spending limits, something intolerable in a western democratic society. Something never seen before. You do not want a referendum, you want to be able to buy the conscience of citizens and block Quebec's aspirations.

This is why I am asking you and all Conservative members from Quebec—on behalf of our growing children, on behalf of senior citizens who fought for years to get what we have in Quebec, on behalf of unemployed workers who dream of sovereignty to find a job at last, on behalf of all those who long for leading this Quebec we have been seeking for generations—I beseech you, please, show courage rather than cowardice and vote against this bill.

Mr. Blackburn (Jonquière): I did not talk about an unworthy bill, but about a flawed bill, which is quite different.

Second, once again I will show the hon. member that when you talk and work hard for changes, changes do sometimes happen.

At first, there was absolutely no spending limit in the bill. With our interventions, it was established at 56.4 cents. That is a step forward. I would have liked to get more. That is only one umbrella committee for the yes side and only one for the side no, because there are two opposing sides. But pursuant to clause 1 of the Constitution: "The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society".

It is on the basis of that clause of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and of the Constitution of 1982 that I argued that we could have one yes committee and one no committee and that we could set a spending limit. But other people told us that pursuant to

clause 2, the Supreme Court of Canada could say that that is unacceptable and contrary to constitutional rules. The future will tell us.

I repeat, I did what I had to do, I moved amendments so that we could have a good bill and my colleagues voted in keeping with democracy. I will not sulk because I did not get what I specifically wanted. We need a referendum bill because, if we face a deadlock without having such a bill at our disposal, the consequences would be serious. So, we have to take our responsibilities.

[English]

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): In the little bit of time we have left, I would like to just mention one figure, and I hope people are listening and watching us on television from coast to coast, from west to east and north to south. The figure I want to mention is 37 cents. It is less than 50 cents. This 37 cents I am talking about is what pensioners received this year from the Canada Pension Plan for an increase in the cost of living; 37 cents. I do not know if you can buy anything at McDonald's for 37 cents. People in the gallery are saying no. I know very few things you can buy for 37 cents.

Mr. Belsher: It is for a quarter of the year.

Mr. Edmonston: That is correct. The member from the government side said the figure is right but it is only for the quarter. That means maybe if our pensioners in this country, French, English and other languages are lucky, they will get more than 37 cents in other quarters of this year. Well that is fine. Perhaps that is the way the government reasons.

An hon. member: How does this get into the referendum?

Mr. Edmonston: It is easy. It is 37 cents to all of our millions of pensioners versus \$108 million for a referendum which is not binding.

An hon. member: Before government advertising.

Mr. Edmonston: It is a referendum where there is no control on the expenses. We do not know what the question will be, but generally this referendum is nothing more than some kind of super survey. That is it.