

RESULT OF REFERENDUM VOTE—RELATION TO ECONOMIC
RECORD OF GOVERNMENT

Hon. Jerahmiel S. Grafstein: This week in London, Ontario, my birthplace, the Prime Minister defended both the Charlottetown Consensus Report and the government's economic record. Will the Government of Canada consider a "yes" result of the vote on the referendum to be a vote of confidence in the government?

● (1420)

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, let me welcome Senator Grafstein back to the Senate, having delivered himself of a speech apparently against the referendum and the referendum question and having declined to say whether he would vote "yes" or "no" in the October 26th referendum.

Senator Corbin: That is a very private matter! It is none of your business! It is time you learned some manners!

Senator Murray: It is a very public matter that the honourable senator did not show up for the vote. Honourable senators, Prime Minister Mulroney dealt with that matter in London, Ontario, also.

This referendum is a referendum on the Charlottetown consensus in respect of which we are glad to have the support, if not of the honourable senator, then at least of his leader, the Honourable Jean Chrétien, and of the Honourable Audrey McLaughlin, leader of the New Democratic Party, and of many others who dissociate themselves from other policies of this government. However, most of us are maintaining a strong common front in support of constitutional renewal on the basis of the Charlottetown consensus, and I hope that before the campaign is over, the honourable senator may see his way clear to join us.

Senator Grafstein: The fact remains that the Prime Minister, during the course of the referendum debate, defended the government's economic record. The only question I wish to ask the Leader of the Government in the Senate is whether, in doing that in the course of a referendum debate, the Government of Canada, in the person of the Leader of the Government of Canada, is in fact seeking a vote of confidence from the Canadian public on its economic record? If the people of Canada, in any part of Canada, choose to reject the accord by voting "no", will the government consider that a vote of confidence for both the referendum and the government's economic record?

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, I have answered the question.

REQUEST FOR TABLING OF CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN
PRIME MINISTER AND PREMIER OF QUEBEC—GOVERNMENT
POSITION

Hon. John B. Stewart: Honourable senators, on Tuesday, September 15, Senator De Bané and I asked questions concerning certain alleged correspondence between the Prime Minister of Canada and the Premier of Quebec. The Leader of

[Senator Murray.]

the Government in the Senate said that he had seen a copy of *La Presse* and that he therein read that *La Presse* had obtained copies of an exchange of correspondence between Prime Minister Mulroney and Premier Bourassa. He then went on to say:

I would have to make inquiries as to whether there has been such an exchange of correspondence, after which I might then be in a position to answer the rest of the question as to whether the two governments think it appropriate to table that exchange of correspondence at this time.

My question to the Leader of the Government in the Senate is the one I asked some nine days ago: Was there such an exchange of correspondence? If there was such an exchange of correspondence, will the government table that correspondence at this time?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, the short answer is "yes" to both questions. I saw the letters in question between the Prime Minister and Premier Bourassa. The Prime Minister is perfectly willing to have his part of the correspondence tabled. I do not have explicit permission from Quebec to do this, but I have reason to believe that they tabled their part of it this correspondence the National Assembly. So I must assume that they would have no objection to our doing so here, and I will do so as soon as I can get the copies together.

Senator Stewart: I thank the minister.

COST AND MEANS OF FINANCING REFERENDUM

Hon. John B. Stewart: Honourable senators, I have another question. Is the Leader of the Government able to tell the Senate the government's calculation or estimate of the cost of conducting the constitutional referendum?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government): I am sorry, but I do not have those figures in my head. I would have to check, but there must be an estimate—I would think there would be. We would have to bring in a Supplementary Estimate—or something of the kind—for the Chief Electoral Officer, if it is not already covered in his budget.

● (1430)

Senator Stewart: To some extent the minister has anticipated my follow-up question, and that question is: To what vote in the appropriation acts enacted earlier this year will the cost of the constitutional referendum be charged? If no provision has already been made in the Estimates, why was an appropriation bill not brought in to cover this important expenditure before both houses adjourned for the duration of the referendum campaign, and is it the intention in the interim to finance the referendum by Governor General's Special Warrants?

Senator Murray: Good questions, honourable senators.

Senator Stewart: The implication being that there is no answer available at this time.