

Therefore—and I emphasize that it is on a purely personal basis—I am glad to agree with the Leader of the Government.

QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE CONSTITUTION

PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Hon. Jacques Flynn (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I note from a report in the press that our vote yesterday on the resolution would give Ottawa the go-ahead to begin a \$1 million advertising campaign in the newspapers, particularly in Quebec, extolling the virtues of the proposed new Charter of Rights. I wonder if the Leader of the Government can confirm whether this is the effect of the vote that we took yesterday.

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have no information on this point. The question will be taken as notice.

Senator Flynn: I have a supplementary question. If the vote did give such a go-ahead, would the leader inquire as to why this campaign started last Sunday in the Quebec papers? I read full pages in the Sunday papers about this.

Senator Perrault: Honourable senators, that inquiry will also be taken as notice.

Senator Flynn: Finally, if this campaign is needed, would the Leader of the Government tell me why he said yesterday that the Charter of Rights was acclaimed everywhere in Canada?

Senator Perrault: Honourable senators, in yesterday's debate I made reference to the fact that in all the Canadian provinces there has been what can only be described as overwhelming support for a Charter of Rights.

● (1450)

Senator Flynn: That is what you said, yes.

Senator Perrault: However, there is a vigorous campaign by the Parti Quebecois in the province of Quebec to describe the constitutional proposals as not serving the best interests of Quebec. In the spirit of freedom of information, the Government of Canada is considering ways in which the facts can be made available to the people of that great province.

Hon. Martial Asselin: Don't tell me those facts will not be partisan.

Senator Flynn: As I understood the Leader of the Government yesterday, that Charter is welcome everywhere. There may be some reaction in Quebec about the amending formula or other parts of the resolution, but, from what I read in this document, the campaign is on the virtues of the proposed new Charter of Rights. If the Leader of the Government was right

yesterday, we should not spend that money for this purpose, since everyone seems to agree, according to him, with the proposed new Charter of Rights.

Senator Perrault: Honourable senators, we are all interested in the opinions offered by Senator Flynn. Personally, I hope at some point in time the Government of Canada will make available to every home in Canada the Charter of Rights which now protects their freedom and liberty in this country. I hope that every person in Canada will have in his home the basic rights which he enjoys under this new Constitution, including his linguistic rights and his cultural rights, which are fully protected so far as Quebec and the other provinces are concerned.

Senator Flynn: You say they are now protected. I suppose you suggest that Westminster will be another rubber stamp, as was the Senate yesterday.

AUDITOR GENERAL

REPORT TO HOUSE OF COMMONS—ALLEGED IMPROPER PAYMENT TO CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

Hon. G. I. Smith: Honourable senators, I should like, if I may, to direct a question to the Leader of the Government. I noted his comment about other questions being speculative. Here I have something which seems pretty solid. It is entitled: "Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the House of Commons." I do not know why it was directed to the House of Commons and to no one else. It is the report for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1981.

It would be pretty hard to describe this as speculative, I think, when we find at page 448 that it says:

In 1980, the CTC—

I take it that that means the Canadian Transport Commission.

—recognized that CN—

I take it that that means the Canadian National Railways.

—was being reimbursed twice for losses incurred: first when the deficits that included these losses were reimbursed by the Department of Transport under annual appropriation acts; second when payments were made by the CTC under the Railway Act in 1978, 1979 and 1980. The CTC estimates that these double payments amounted to \$53 million.

Hon. Jack Marshall: Just what they need.

Senator Smith: There is a lot more which follows. I will not weary the house by trying to read it all now. Perhaps I will entertain the house with more excerpts a little later. I ask the Leader of the Government what efforts are being made by the government to recoup that sum of \$53 million which was an improper payment to Canadian National Railways, according to the Auditor General.

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, Senator Smith asks a good question.