

*The Constitution*

we come back to this chamber, each and every member will have had the opportunity to express himself, or herself, through that cherished, precious right of freedom of speech which relates to the very work we are doing in terms of the constitution and all the work we will carry out once the constitution is brought back in terms of the amending formula.

**Mr. Clark:** Mr. Speaker, returning to my point of order—I and I know the hon. member would not want to mislead the House or the public—I would remind him of his undertaking to reply to my two questions at the end of his remarks. I would like him to explain to us how freedom of speech is guaranteed by the imposition of closure. Second, and this matter is of very real interest to all members of the House, he spoke about the opportunity for full debate once the matter is out of committee. Will the hon. member tell us now how many days and weeks of full debate in the House of Commons the Government of Canada is prepared to guarantee once the proposal comes back from committee? The hon. member claims to be interested in the right of parliamentary debate, so these points should be of interest to him, and I know he wanted the opportunity to respond.

**Mr. Harquail:** Mr. Speaker, I want to express my appreciation to the Leader of the Opposition for giving me the opportunity to speak once again. I would like to explain to the Canadian people that we have rules in this House. Standing Orders 75A, B and C have on many occasions been misquoted in a misleading fashion. Standing Order 75C has been referred to as closure. It was never closure. This is closure, but all those other times we were not on closure. With respect to the other question, I would have thought the right hon. member would have learned the lesson as Prime Minister to respect his House leader. Our House leader answers for our party and he will give indication to members opposite about the decisions by government, which has been elected to govern, as to how much time will be allotted for the debate and when we will debate, and I suspect the right hon. gentleman respects that.

**Mr. Clark:** That means we will have closure again.

**Mr. Bill McKnight (Kindersley-Lloydminster):** Mr. Speaker, it is with feelings of pleasure and regret that I stand in this House tonight to speak on the constitution and the future of Canada. The regret is that I have only 20 minutes to speak. I hear hon. members opposite saying that all they need is another westerner. We just heard the hon. member for Restigouche (Mr. Harquail) talk about the freedom of this House and now some members are saying that all they need is another westerner. I can tell hon. members opposite that we in western Canada feel that we are a part of Canada. We are proud of Canada and we intend to tell the people of Canada about our feelings and how we want to stay in Canada.

Members are allowed only 20 minutes to speak on the Constitution of Canada. The future of our country, the future of my children, my grandchildren and my great grandchildren will be decided by members who will speak for a brief 20

minutes. We have had only 24 hours of debate. Some of my hon. friends on this side will not have an opportunity to speak this evening. Many of them will be denied that right because of the gag rule, because of closure, because of the stifling of free speech which has been imposed upon this House.

Yesterday the House had the opportunity to debate and vote on a motion proposed by my party which would immediately patriate, immediately domicile in Canada, the Constitution of Canada. It could have been brought home with an amending formula agreed upon by the ten premiers of Canada and then debated in this House until we had a Canadian constitution for Canadians. We all know what happened. We have not changed our ideas about Canada. We have not changed our ideas on getting the constitution home, but the government voted against our proposal.

Not only did the government vote against it, but so did members of the New Democratic Party. The loudest objection which we heard yesterday from members of the government was that our proposal would allow some provinces the right to opt out if there was a federal intrusion on their jurisdiction. It would have allowed them to decide whether or not they would like to be included in a federal intrusion on their jurisdiction. They said that was not right.

The people of Canada not only elect members to the House of Commons, but they also elect members to the legislatures and they, too, are Canadians who represent their people and they, too, have a right in Canada. When I entered this House a year ago, I had many things in mind. I entered it with a great deal of respect for all members but particularly for those of long service. Some of those whom I respect have a legend which goes before them. One such member is the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) who is known as a great citizen and an upright supporter of the free speech.

Yesterday when this government imposed closure on us, that supposedly hon. member whom I respected did not stand when it came time. He sat in his place and allowed the House of Commons to be gagged without uttering a word. The people from Saskatchewan, Kindersley-Lloydminster constituency which I represent and the people from all the other constituencies, which are represented by members of my party and members of the New Democratic Party, have a belief in Canada and want to stay in Canada. I was pleased when the Prime Minister made the announcement that the constitutional resolution would be represented in the House. The hon. member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom) and the hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Hovdebo), though we are not of the same political party and have several differences of opinion, expressed the feelings, the desires and concerns of their constituents.

The hon. member for Prince Albert is quoted in the Prince Albert *Daily Herald* of Friday, October 3, as saying, "Prime Minister Trudeau's move to patriate the British North America Act is a study in cynicism". He said that the Prime Minister was trying to patriate without provincial consensus, that he ignored the issues and that a provincial consensus was needed if the federal government was going to continue to