

friends and atheists, none of whom is here, which does not surprise me, are in such a hurry to pass this resolution.

Mr. Knowles: Order!

Mr. Wenman: The New Democrat is here to comment on my speech again. I thank him very much. I can see why the atheists and socialists want this motion passed right away. They have been successful in blotting out all references to the supremacy of God, all references to private ownership of property, the sanctity of the individual as a human being and the value and position of the family as the basic structure and unit of our society. Certainly the socialists and atheists want this through quickly.

However, the big surprise was to find the Liberal Party of Canada under this Prime Minister not only condoning the desecration of these values and refusing to recognize them in our Constitution, but attempting to implement some kind of charter without them. Such a charter is deficient and must not be allowed to proceed through this House of Commons. These values are the only ones that give credibility to any constitution for Canada. The piece of paper will be meaningless without them.

Herein is our statement of creed, our beliefs, what we will stand for and not stand for. Not only should this charter suggest rights, but it should be extended. We need a charter of responsibilities as well as a charter of rights. We should be equally ready to discuss and entrench not only these rights but the responsibilities that a Canadian owes his country.

I wish there were an adequate way for me to express my gratitude that I feel in being a Canadian, the appreciation that somehow through fate I was born a citizen of this country. This country has given me everything; education and an opportunity to develop the individual being that is within me. I care about this country. I love this country. I want to keep this country together.

A basic foundation for keeping this country together is the Constitution. I care too much to have my Constitution, the Constitution of my country, shortchanged to suit the expediency and timetable of one man in his particular space and place in time.

I would be doing my constituents a wrong, I would be doing everything that I understand this Parliament to have been throughout history a disservice, if I were to support this motion in this form through this process and for the purposes stated so far. I have no problem in voting against this resolution. It is lacking in the basic principles and values which have made this nation, Canada, the nation it is today.

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, this is an historic debate, a momentous debate, a serious debate. Initially I want to congratulate the leading speakers for each of the three parties for their contribution to the debate; my colleague the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chrétien), the hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Epp) and the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent). They made

responsible contributions to the discussion. I only hope that as the debate proceeds we will be able to sustain that serious level.

The hon. member for Provencher said yesterday our differences on this question run deep, revealing different views on the nature of Canada. I believe his statement is true, although not in the way he described. This has become clear. It became clear to me during the summer when I, along with my colleague, the Minister of Justice, took part in federal-provincial discussions. It became clear during those discussions and during the first ministers' conference, and it is becoming clear in this debate, that there are, underlying the divergent views expressed, different views given on the nature of Canada. Simply put, our view on this side of the House is that Canada is much more than the sum of its provinces or the sum of the regions of the country. It is not a kind of self-help contract made among the provinces. It is not, to use Senator Forsey's expression, a "geographical expression".

When the Fathers of Confederation did their work in the 1860s, they were not only concerned, although they certainly were, about maintaining the economic and military security of regions of their society; they consciously undertook the task of building a new nation from coast to coast. That view, if one goes through the confederation debates, blows like a tempest through their discussions. Here are the words of George Brown, expressed 116 years ago this month. After having drawn a comparison between the British colonies and various countries in Europe, he went on to say and I quote:

Well, sir, the bold scheme in your hands is nothing less than to gather all these countries into one—to organize them all under one government—

Our scheme is to establish a government that will seek to turn the tide of European emigration into this northern half of the American continent—that will strive to develop its great natural resources—and that will endeavour to maintain liberty, and justice, and Christianity through the land... Sir, the whole great ends of this confederation may not be realized in the lifetime of many who now hear me. We imagine not that such a structure can be built in a month or in a year. What we propose now is but to lay the foundations of the structure—to set in motion the governmental machinery that will one day, we trust, extend from the Atlantic to the Pacific. And we take especial credit to ourselves that the system we have devised, while admirably adapted to our present situation, is capable of gradual and efficient expansion in future years to meet all the great purposes contemplated by our scheme.

It is in furtherance of those objectives that we have presented this resolution to the House of Commons. The hon. member for Provencher said yesterday repeatedly, I am sure sincerely but falsely, that the view on this side of the House is that the federal system had not worked, that it had failed and that we were seeking to alter the fundamental nature of the federation, that the federation would be subverted.

None of those charges is true. We are proud of the achievements of the Canadian federation. Indeed, we believe that our party has been responsible for many of those achievements. We are proud of our system of government, of its accomplishments and of the historic role that our party has had in pursuing them.

We have not said the federation has failed. What we have said is that the pursuit of an amending formula agreed to by all provincial governments, a pursuit that has taken place over