

*The Constitution*

of equal importance. And it is to represent in all fairness and equity all Canadians from coast to coast. At the constitutional conference held last September, one of the major points to remember is that the Prime Minister of Canada did not have the mandate to hand over to each provincial premier a part of our Canadian heritage. Nobody has the mandate to hand over to any region of Canada whatever belongs *de facto* and *de jure* to every Canadian citizen.

When I asked a little while ago in what spirit that reform, that unlocking action had been initiated, I did say that it had been devised out of a moral commitment. And when the Progressive Conservative Party was in power, they also had voiced such a moral commitment to get to effect those changes. At his press conference two weeks ago, the Leader of the Opposition indicated that he agreed in principle with the government's proposal, but that he could not agree with the means being used. But should we fight over the means, the structures? Should we not instead seek a formula which would meet the needs of Canadians? Who will actually benefit from this constitutional breakthrough? Everybody seems eager to defend his own structure, to speak on behalf of the group he represents, but there is something all hon. members should try to understand, and it is that we represent each and every member of these organizations. The same people who are part of these organizations have also elected us. This is a basic truth which is often overlooked.

Furthermore, the government's proposal is designed for future generations, while this debate more often than not is used to promote short-term political interests. The generation to which I belong is really getting impatient and is not interested in sacrificing its youth discussing constitutional matters for the next 53 years. This is of paramount importance.

For too long we have been sacrificed in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada in the interests of a false nationalism, always inspiring but restrictive. This plan requires from all Canadians what the philosopher Bergson called a supplement of soul. That is what we need in the House. We have the impression, not to say personal conviction, that some people are interested in discussing rather than making headway.

The people of Manicouagan are proud workers who elected me to defend the economy, to find work for their children and not to quibble for 50 years about issues which are mostly out of date. I think that if Canada is to progress we need that change of direction which will enable us to plan much further. The debate which has been going on for years is a stumbling block hindering Canada's evolution.

Still in 1980 we are taking up weeks to discuss a matter which members of Parliament should have solved in the fifties. This was for the country a truly rotten gift which is corroding the social fabric to the extent that we now have the impression that a withdrawal would be the best formula. The members of the government team have taken up the challenge to expand

Canadian views and allow Canadians to be everywhere at home.

Of course, this is a tremendous challenge and there are people who are convinced, I think, that it might be an impossible undertaking.

Yet, it has been demonstrated that Canadians want to meet that challenge, particularly in Quebec. In spite of what some people might think of his character, the Prime Minister of Canada has been elected five times in Quebec and each time with an increased majority. So, as concerns Quebec, there is no need to say that he has the absolute confidence of the people and if you want to talk about a traitor you should find another person than this Prime Minister.

If you want to learn about our Prime Minister's vision concerning the constitution, you just need to refer to the book he wrote in 1976 entitled "Federalism and French Canadians", on page 52. About a possible constitutional reform, he said and I quote:

There is nothing easier than proposing constitutional reforms, and I could very easily outline several points that would some day have to be taken into account by a new constitution. For example:

(a) A bill of rights could be incorporated into the constitution, to limit the powers that legal authorities have over human rights in Canada. In addition to protecting traditional political and social rights, such a bill would specifically put the French and English languages on an equal basis before the law.

Virtually the exact wording or at least the spirit of that text is to be found in the proposed resolution.

(b) The protection of basic rights having thus been ensured, there would be no danger in reducing the central government's predominance in certain areas (for example, by abolishing the right of reservation and disallowance); at the same time, this would have the advantage of getting rid of some of the constitution's imperial phraseology.

And so on and so forth—

When faced with references to sell-out or about-face, to a man who does not know where he is going, it is very easy to prove that this is not so by going through the writings of that man in order to show how true it is. If one politician stood up these recent years, it is the current leader of the Liberal party. And I feel this is what the people want, somebody with a direction, somebody with a vision of this country's future. And it is important to emphasize this because in Quebec we hear regularly the terms traitor and treason. These terms bounced around all through the referendum campaign. And, needless to repeat, both French-speaking Quebecers and the total Quebec population voted no, they voted to remain in Canada. This is fundamental.

And the patriation and amendment provisions, as with all the aspects included in the document, confirm the supremacy of citizens over the structure of state. I cannot see why the provinces can object to what is inside, because this exercise is simply to give more rights to citizens, but without, of course, going through the provincial structures, and all premiers would prefer that this go through provincial structures. If we could