

ment, members who will be appointed by the government in power. I want to inform the people of Canada that their rights and freedoms presently protected and advanced by Parliament will in future be manipulated and interpreted for them by the imaginations of lawyers, as one expert witness said, and the size of an individual's bank account, for that shall be their only recourse.

This is the clear and simple fact of the case, and it is futile for members on the other side to try to attach some sort of anti-motherhood, anti-rights and freedoms bias on the voices of opposition here. They know that we speak the truth and the situation will be a I have described it. For the benefit of these true detractors of freedom opposite, I would like to acquaint them with the words of the eminent twentieth century philosopher, Hand, who addressed this question in 1942 in a far more eloquent and pertinent way than I have heard any hon. member opposite do. He said that a society so driven that the spirit of moderation is gone, no court can save; that a society where that spirit of moderation flourishes, no court need save; that a society which evades its responsibility by thrusting upon the courts the nurture of that spirit of moderation, in the end will perish.

The Progressive Conservatives want our Constitution brought home and we want it brought home immediately. Last October 2, that was made very clear in this House when the motion was moved by our leader. That motion was voted against by members of the government. The Progressive Conservative Party wants a fair and workable amending formula, arrived at by consensus. The Progressive Conservative party wants the rights and freedoms of Canadians guaranteed in our Constitution.

Our members on the constitutional committee worked effectively to improve the draft charter of rights and freedoms. Thanks to PC initiatives, significant improvements were made in provisions dealing with the handicapped, the deaf, the denominational schools, and the territorial representation at future constitutional conferences.

We would like to see more improvements, too. We believe our Constitution should acknowledge the ultimate supremacy of God, it should guarantee the right of individual Canadians to own property, and it should be strengthened to ensure the true equality of men and women. We want the best possible charter of rights and freedoms for Canadians. But we insist that our rights be approved in Canada, not finalized by the colonial act of another country.

We have proposed that kind of formula—the Vancouver consensus—which as late as last September was accepted in principle by all of the provinces. The Vancouver formula would require that any constitutional changes involving both levels of government be approved by the federal government, plus at least seven provinces representing at least 50 per cent of the Canadian population. It would protect essential provincial interests involving the rights and powers of their legislatures and the ownership and control of their property and natural resources, all areas in which the provinces have been guaranteed protection since confederation began in 1867.

The Constitution

The Vancouver formula would allow constitutional changes to be approved by Ottawa plus a reasonable provincial majority. It would treat all provinces as equals. The Liberals want a very different kind of amending formula. Under their proposal, two provinces, Quebec and Ontario, would have a permanent veto over any constitutional change, regardless of whether or not they had at that time 25 percent of the population. There would be a different set of rules for Atlantic provinces, and still another set of rules for provinces in western Canada. Provinces would cease to be equals; instead, we would have first, second and even third-class members of the confederation.

The Prime Minister also wants to give Ottawa unilateral power to use a referendum to make constitutional changes without any reference whatsoever to the elected provincial governments and legislatures. That would end completely the partners of Canadian federalism.

There is no doubt in my mind that what this country is moving toward is a new type of government. Perhaps you can call it socialism, perhaps you can call it a republic, but the most important and most dangerous aspect of this move to a new form of government is that it is changing what we have grown to know, understand and appreciate as a group of equal partners coming together freely and willingly. It is changing it into a strong, central, unitary government and it is not going to be accepted by the majority of the people of Canada.

Mr. J. R. Ellis (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) is fond of pointing out that the debate on the Constitution has been going on for almost 50 years. He has said that the consent of the provinces has been sought for 53 years and that for 53 years we have failed. Before I finish my remarks this evening, I intend to point out the fallacy of these statements together with a number of others.

To take part in this historic debate on the twelfth day of March in the year of our Lord 1981 is, of course, a privilege, a privilege that must be extended to every Member of Parliament. It may be difficult to place a different perspective or perhaps a perspective more meaningful to the area I represent in light of all those things that have already been said by those who have already spoken. However, to not enter into the debate and by my silence perhaps indicate, even directly, a support of the government action which is not there would be unthinkable.

I did not personally sit on the committee that undertook an extraordinarily heavy workload for some 14 weeks. Some might say because of that the voice of Prince Edward-Hastings was not properly heard on the committee and in the debate, and that my brief intervention here will not be sufficient. I suggest that I was well represented on the committee, as were the people of Prince Edward-Hastings.

I say with all the emphasis I can muster that on February 4 when the hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Epp) introduced an amendment to write into the Constitution that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth of Canada is indeed the Queen of Canada