

*Constitution of Canada*

importance of this question in relation to a matter that is so fundamental to the country.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette):** Mr. Speaker, I have no hesitation in rising this afternoon to support unreservedly this submission and the request of the hon. members for Charlevoix (Mr. Asselin) and Matane (Mr. De Bané) so that this report can be tabled before the House.

Reference was made to the importance of our constitutional future in relation to the report produced by the committee and it is clear also in my mind that we have recognized that there could be no unanimity on this committee. A minority report is not normally acceptable to the House. I think however that one must consider the implications of the particular report that is being presented to us. I know that traditionally minority reports have not often been tabled, although it is recognized that precedents have existed.

Mr. Speaker, to justify the tabling of such a report, I should like to lay strong emphasis on the importance of the submission that is being made to the House by the hon. members for Charlevoix and Matane.

Members from Quebec and all others obviously need the information contained in the report which could be titled: Everything that a Member of Parliament Should Know. It faithfully reflects the situation in a province unsure of a country's future. I therefore believe that the clear and distinct conditions and explanations it contains would enable our English-speaking friends and colleagues to understand that the report is invaluable as far as the constitutional future of our country is concerned.

I am convinced that I had to make those few comments in order to justify the presentation of the report and that the federal government and Parliament today had the opportunity of proving themselves. Rejection of the report could be interpreted by citizens of one province as the refusal to acknowledge and listen to the truth which should have been exposed in the House a long time ago.

For all those various reasons, I dare hope that all members of the House will co-operate for unanimous concurrence in the report.

[*English*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I do not intend to limit in any way the discussion of this very interesting and important point of order but as the afternoon wears on I would hope that all hon. members would want to attempt to limit their contributions to the procedural aspect of the discussion. I am sure this is what has been done pretty well until now. Hon. members may agree that to this point we have considered most of the procedural arguments which might be advanced in relation to the point of order raised by the hon. member for Charlevoix. Having said that, it is certainly not my intention to limit the discussion and I shall listen to further argument on the procedural aspect of the matter.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Georges-C. Lachance (Lafontaine):** Mr. Speaker, you are perfectly right when you say that the comments which have been presented may have exhausted the matter, but on the other hand, I would like to draw your

[Mr. MacDonald (Egmont).]

attention to the fact that there is another precedent, in 1964, and I think that it is worth mentioning.

When the Special Committee on the Flag included in its report the votes taken during its proceedings, it was then extremely important that hon. members knew that votes had taken place, and I even think that the names of hon. members who had voted on those occasions were listed in the report. I am not absolutely sure of that, but the result of the votes was in that report.

I was sitting on the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on the Constitution, and I have personal remarks to make in that connection. These comments should be added as an appendix to the report or be included in it.

I read the report prepared by the hon. member for Charlevoix (Mr. Asselin) and the hon. member for Matane (Mr. De Bané). I fully agree with their remarks, and I would also like my report to be tabled with the majority report.

• (1450)

[*English*]

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, there were, I believe two aspects to the point of order raised by the hon. member for Charlevoix (Mr. Asselin). If I may deal with the first aspect at the beginning, it was to the effect that dissenting opinions expressed in the committee have not been recorded in the report which has already been tabled. It has been stated that that was the practice followed by the committee on external affairs, as verified now by the chairman of that committee. It seems to me that was the line of argument taken by the hon. member for Egmont (Mr. MacDonald) also. On that particular aspect of the problem I am not proposing to argue, because it is a matter that ultimately must be resolved in committee and it does not arise in this case because the report now before the House does not contain any dissenting opinion. It may be that in future, through examination in the committee on procedure, we ought to devise a method or recognize a procedure by which dissenting opinion can be set out in the main report of a committee.

I believe we ought to reflect for a moment on the nature of the parliamentary process and on the nature of the reference that has been given to this committee and which was discharged today. The House of Commons asked the committee to study and bring forward recommendations on the constitution of Canada for consideration by the House. In the normal course the decision, either in this chamber or in a committee of the House, is rendered through the decision of the majority. The decision of that majority, whether in a committee of the House or in the House itself, becomes the decision of the House itself. It is recognized in the constitution of Canada that the majority decision becomes the decision of the House. The committee, having received a reference from the House of Commons, has deliberated. The majority has reached conclusions that have become the report of the committee itself as presented to the House. That is the traditional approach that has been followed pretty regularly, with the exception that has already been noted, and it may be an exception that we ought to continue in the future.