

that Quebec plays a key and vital role in our country. We believe that not only does the Accord reunite Canada, but it does so in a spirit of co-operative federalism both in the manner in which the Accord was reached, and in its provisions.

As a geographer by profession, I am always cognizant of the difficulties of governing a country as large as Canada. In many ways we are fortunate to live in the second largest country in the world geographically. As a result, we live in a country that is extremely complex, complicated, diverse, and consequently requires the type of genuine federal system that we have in Canada.

To make a federal system work requires federal and provincial level governments to be able to work together in a spirit of consultation, negotiation, and of course, compromise. Compromise is almost inevitable in a country as complex as ours when it comes to reaching national objectives. It is for that reason that, on balance, we believe that the decision that was obtained that became the Meech Lake Accord not only reflects the reality of Canada, but reflects a major building block in the development of the Constitution.

My support for the Accord is not only because we have now closed the gap and are happy that Quebec is part of the constitutional family, but because of other positive aspects. With Quebec now being part of the constitutional family, the log jam that has held up so many decisions in the last little while is no longer there. This blockage has been broken, and enables us to address in a very serious manner a whole number of related issues for which we have concern, not the least of which would be the concerns of the aboriginal peoples and their advancement of self-government. This now enables us to address these other issues in terms of constitutional change, and that again has to be seen as a major and positive step forward.

I am also pleased to see that the spending powers are now enshrined in the Constitution. There are no changes in the relative powers of the federal Government, and there are no changes in the authority of the federal Government to spend in areas of mixed jurisdiction. Now for the first time in our Constitution the federal Government is able to spend in areas of provincial jurisdiction.

Our Party feels that now is the time to initiate and launch a comprehensive child care policy across Canada. This particular aspect of the Accord provides us with that opportunity.

If a province wishes to opt out, it will only receive federal financing if it develops a program that is "compatible with national objectives". That means that if the provincial program is as good as that proposed by the federal Government in terms of objectives, the province would then receive the appropriate funding. In some cases, we can assume it may even be better. As an example, we may look at the Canadian Pension Plan and the Quebec Pension Plan. The Quebec Pension Plan has better provisions for Quebecers than the

Canada Pension Plan. Rather than being gloomy or pessimistic, we ought to see it as a real positive step in enabling the federal Government to take national initiatives.

However, there are problems. In something as complicated as this is, when a consensus is built by the First Ministers, and there is the general support of all three political Parties, we do not wish to suggest that there are no problems that must be faced. Indeed, there are a number.

At the top of the list is the whole matter of equality rights for women. Interestingly, Section 28 of the Charter follows Sections 25 and 27 that are included in Section 16 of the Accord. It is fair to say that during the discussions on the Accord, the First Ministers forgot about women. We recognize the sexual equality rights as transcending language rights and cultural rights. Why were they not mentioned in the Accord? Why were they not placed in the Accord? Of course, we have been asked to have trust and faith in the Ministers. We heard that in 1981 and 1982 when we were told that collective bargaining would be protected under the freedom of association clauses. In retrospect we find out that that was not the case, and that those rights were not protected.

At the top of the list there are some serious improvements to be made in terms of ensuring sexual equality in our country. It is certainly clear that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is not totally paramount when it comes to rights because of Clause 1 of the Charter which allows for reasonable limits on those rights.

We suggest that Section 28, the equality of rights section of the Charter, should be restructured in Section 60 of the Accord. This was recommended by both the National Advisory Committee on the Status of Women, and *la Fédération des Femmes du Québec*. It is something that we feel ought to be a top priority when the First Ministers meet again.

We also support the fairness for aboriginal peoples. There was a deep disappointment felt by many when we put forward the recommendation that a conference on self-government ought to be enshrined in Section 50 of the Accord. A major shortcoming of the agreement is that there is no real commitment or statement that is included in the Accord to guarantee to aboriginal peoples an obvious advancement of their concerns, especially in terms of self-government.

There is also a lack of fairness for northern Canadians. Canadians who live north of 60° have been left out of the process. They were left out of the discussions, and it is certainly not fair that it now requires unanimity to create a new province north of 60°. A number of people or groups, such as the aboriginal people, have suggested changes for the territories, and perhaps we ought to retain the present amending formula since these issues ought not to require the necessity of unanimity.

We also must flush out the fact that 30 per cent of Canadians are not of Anglo-Saxon, Francophone, or native heritage. In fact, 30 per cent come from other countries and they reflect