

I do not want to rehearse history, but I am delighted that this particular resolution will provide to the Acadians in my constituency in the counties of Inverness, Richmond and Antigonish, the opportunity, if the parents so wish, for children to be educated in the French language. They will have legal recourse if this venture, this enterprise, succeeds, a right which has never existed in the past. I find it very difficult as a representative of those Acadians not to be deeply touched at the opportunity I shall have when this motion comes to the vote to stand in this House on their behalf and, I hope, by this act of Parliament vindicate their patience and their confident expectation that ultimately justice would be done.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. MacEachen:** Mr. Speaker, I want to say a word about another matter which, while of great interest to Canada as a whole, is of particular interest to the Atlantic provinces, namely, the resource question. The NDP has indicated its support for the motion depending on what we do on resources.

**An hon. Member:** Not all of them.

**Mr. MacEachen:** I say to my old friend and my young friend, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), that the NDP have never stopped trading—the party is still trading, and here they are again. That is all right, someone else is dealing with that particular aspect of the discussions, but I want to say a word about the question of offshore resources. During the constitutional talks this summer and during this parliamentary debate it has often been suggested that offshore resources should be treated like onshore resources. What this contention simply ignores is that offshore resources are different. Through international negotiations Canada acquired for all Canadians, not only for the residents of the coastal provinces, sovereign rights over the continental shelf for the purpose of exploring it and exploiting its natural resources. I emphasize the fact that Canada's boundaries, Canada's territory, has not been extended, although there are certain persons and groups who believe Canada's boundaries and territory have been extended and that therefore it gives us an opportunity to extend the boundaries of the provinces. There can be no question of extending the boundaries of the provinces since the boundaries of the country as a whole have not been extended. But we have sovereign rights over the continental shelf for the purpose of exploring it and exploiting its natural resources.

● (1610)

It is interesting to observe that at the same time several provinces are arguing that they should have complete control over offshore resources, the international community has accepted the principle of sharing the wealth of the high seas among all countries, not only among coastal states. While all the premiers in Canada would apparently reject the notion that our offshore is part of the heritage of all Canadians the concept of the common heritage of mankind has been accepted internationally, as far as the international seabed is concerned.

### *The Constitution*

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. MacEachen:** What an irony! It is a fact, and it is ironic as well. But I will not pursue that line except to say that given the economic situation in Atlantic Canada and the importance of offshore mineral resource development for the residents of that region and despite our legal position, the federal government nonetheless made what I consider to have been a very reasonable offer to the coastal provinces at the first ministers' conference. During the constitutional discussions the federal government proposed that until they become affluent coastal provinces receive the same kinds of revenues from offshore resources as are derived by provinces with onshore resources. After that point the revenues would be shared with all Canadians.

The Prime Minister did say during the first ministers' conference—and I think it is worth repeating—the following on this point: the federal government believes that when a province grows wealthy enough to stand on its own feet it should then begin to share its wealth with the rest of the country. That is the vision of Canada we are offering to Canadians, one in which we all grow strong by helping each other. And that is another proposition I would be prepared to stand on in any part of Canada, including my own province of Nova Scotia.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. MacEachen:** I do not wish to say anything further, except I would not like the occasion created by the failure to agree at the constitutional conference to be used to foster alienation in the province of Nova Scotia on the question of the offshore because there is no basis for building the feeling of alienation which seems to be embarked upon at the present time in my province. The fact of the matter is, I have before me some statements from the Premier of Nova Scotia and, later, from a member of the delegation, saying that the province of Nova Scotia recognizes that the federal government has an important role in the offshore, that intensive negotiations have taken place between the Government of Canada and Nova Scotia, that there is a wide area of agreement and that the province and the Government of Canada were close to an agreement and that, indeed, the expectation was expressed that an agreement would be reached. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, through you to the House of Commons and elsewhere, speaking about the situation in Nova Scotia, that the reasonable offer made by the Government of Canada at the first ministers' conference was such that it almost resulted in an agreement with the province of Nova Scotia and I have no doubt that if all the other elements had fallen into place there would have been a clear, firm agreement between my province and the Government of Canada. We ought to build on that situation into the future, in Nova Scotia rather than embark upon a fruitless and unproductive effort to create alienation and build up resentment against the Government of Canada where there is no basis for such resentment to exist.

I see I am drawing close to the end of the time allotted to me for my remarks. Before concluding I would like to thank