

The Constitution

powers is not consistent with our Canadian constitutional history. It must be changed, and I sincerely ask members opposite to vote for our amendment presently before the House.

In summary, it seems to my mind that the amending formula, the entrenched charter, the referendum clause and the specific omission of clauses respecting property, the supremacy of God, the dignity and worth of the person, the attempt to rewrite history and more, all signify a regressive step in our national evolution. The end does not justify the means today any more than it did in 1841. The attempt to rewrite history by changing the names of the various British North America Acts is an act in the finest of Marxist theory, but it is not part of our Canadian history.

By passing this proposal, we will be condemning ourselves and future generations to discord and dispute, because forces are gathering in the west which will not accept a secondary status in Canada. We will be equal or we will be separate, sir. That is the concept to which western Canadians are flocking today. They will be equal or they will be separate. These mean and petty attempts to block our equality will simply cause deadlock until they are changed. What a tragedy it is that the very people who should understand most clearly do not.

Mr. Jesse P. Flis (Parkdale-High Park): Mr. Speaker, it is fitting that the present debate on the proposed new Constitution is taking place in the Senate and in the House of Commons during the month of March. For it was on March 8, 1867, that the British North America Act was passed by the House of Commons in Great Britain, 114 years and three days ago. The BNA Act was proclaimed in Canada on March 29, 1867, and Queen Victoria declared July 1 as the day of confederation.

Today we are trying to shake off the last vestiges of our colonial status. Canadians from coast to coast are agreed that this last vestige of colonial status must end. Canada has reached the crossroads in its history. The time has arrived for Canada to thank Great Britain for being the guardian of our Constitution and to request the British Parliament to amend the BNA Act for the last time. Canada has reached full adulthood.

In this House on February 17, the hon. member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent) reminded us that now is the time in Canadian history to act, we have waited long enough.

[Translation]

Now is the time in Canadian history to act; we have waited long enough.

[English]

As chairman of the special parliamentary committee on the proposed national trading corporation, I have learned from Canadian manufacturers and exporters that our feeling of Canadian nationalism and patriotism for our country does not flow into commercial and economic fields. For example, do hon. members of this House know what the big trading slogans are in the successful manufacturing and exporting countries, such as Japan and West Germany? They are their national

symbols: "Made in Japan," and "Made in West Germany". Members of the special committee have come to realize that each nation acts as one when producing and exporting goods and services. Each country is not a divided nation, but united and extremely efficient when it comes to dealing with other nations. Can we as Canadians say the same when certain provinces want increasingly to act alone with their industrial and export strategies?

By bringing the Constitution home, we will bring to Canada the powers to master our own destiny. It is with this same feeling of patriotism that we can begin to generate the necessary capital and human resources to take control of our industries and natural resources from foreign domination. It is only then that we can begin effectively to plan to increase our economic clout with other exporting nations.

Countries around the world are hungry for made-in-Canada products and equipment. They want Canadian management, engineering and construction expertise. Patriating our Constitution with a charter of rights and an amending formula will give us the maturity to export goods and services under a national symbol, under a Canadian identity. Canada will then achieve the self-concept it requires. "Self-concept" is defined by psychologists as "What is my perception of myself, and how do I think others perceive me?" Canada's "id" or ego has not been the healthiest over the last century.

Unfortunately, we are still perceived by many countries as a colonial state, a consuming country, a country which has not achieved complete sovereignty. Patriating our Constitution with a charter of rights and with an amending formula will enhance Canada's self-concept to the level of a true national identity. So that when someone asks our children and their children, "Who are you?", they will proudly respond, "I am a Canadian"; "Je suis Canadien".

Canadians have done much already in assisting Canada to achieve a national identity, a national self image. The Canadian Citizenship Act, the Canadian flag, the Canadian national anthem, are but a few examples of this maturation.

[Translation]

In my opinion two stages in the development and maturation of Canada are still misunderstood.

[English]

The first stage is for this Parliament to designate July 1 as Canada Day. The second stage is for both Houses to give unanimous consent to patriate the Canadian Constitution with an amending formula and a charter of rights.

On October 29, 1980, one day after the House of Commons committee on the Constitution of Canada was struck, I wrote a letter to the chairmen of the committee, and I sent a copy to all members of the committee. The hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Epp) tried to take me to task in this House on that but I want to assure him that my intentions were very honourable.

The letter read:

In view of the fact that I have been receiving many representations from Canadians of non-English and non-French-speaking backgrounds, I request the opportunity to appear before the committee as a witness. The purpose of my