

*The Constitution*

must be more responsive to their constituents. This would lessen the need for the daily adversarial tone of this House and hopefully improve the decorum of MPs.

Today almost every individual I talk to, young or old, tells me they are repulsed by the petty and childish actions of elected officials playing to the media, and particularly to the TV cameras in this House.

At this point my constituents, as I believe most Canadians, are very concerned about our economy. The public debt load and economic downturn have forced governments at all levels to make the tough decisions of raising taxes, cutting services or increasing deficits in order to continue to provide programs and services which all Canadians have come to enjoy and expect.

The harsh reality is that while municipal governments blame provincial governments for the lack of funding and provincial governments blame the federal government for the same woe, there exists only one taxpayer from whom to reap the revenue.

Governments of every level are realizing, albeit some more slowly than others, that responsible fiscal management is absolutely essential. It is most refreshing to hear the premier of British Columbia say: "You can't spend your way out of a recession".

Certainly there is much more to being a Canadian than economic considerations. However, we are failing Canadians who find it necessary to stay on social assistance generation after generation and many aboriginal people who live in Third World standards amid alcoholism and poverty. Our system must encourage and not discourage individual initiative.

Canadians who have fallen into the cycle of social assistance have had their work ethic destroyed by welfare just as socialism has destroyed communist ideology throughout the world.

The working poor of Canada are becoming more and more frustrated with the ever-diminishing fruits of their hard labour and business investments. Canadians are concerned with the economy, but in the end economic prosperity depends on national unity.

A divided country creates a climate of uncertainty, and political uncertainty leads to economic and social stagnation.

If we are wise as well as bold, we have an opportunity here at this moment to create a modern, efficient and dynamic Canada for a new century and beyond. As we debate and discuss the renewal of Canada's constitution, I feel that now more than ever it is important that we remember and consider the legacy left to Canada by the monarchy and the debt which we owe this part of our past for its contribution to Canada's distinctness in North America.

Unlike the United States and many other countries, Canada has been fortunate enough not to have to endure a civil war, largely thanks to our monarchy. The United Empire Loyalists who supported the monarchy permitted and encouraged the development of representative institutions to serve Canadians well.

It is certainly not my constituents' suggestion that we return to our past but I would urge all Canadians to appreciate and perhaps be guided by our heritage.

For over 200 years the Crown has given Canadians a common purpose. Today as we search to redefine that purpose we must not forget that legacy.

I have no hesitation in supporting Quebec's right to its culture, system of civil law, religion, language and traditions which were guaranteed in the Quebec Act of 1774. Any constitution should go a long way toward these definitions by simply recognizing what has been a reality since being provided by the Crown over 200 years ago.

Canada is graced with not one, but several distinct societies. The first is the native people, the original inhabitants of Canada who have participated in Canada's development through their efforts supporting the Crown in its resistance to countries such as the United States.

The second is the French inhabitants who brought to Canada their own system of culture and language and who have made an enormous contribution to Canada's unique identity in North America.

A third distinct group in Canada are the United Empire Loyalists who have also put their own stamp on the Canadian landscape, playing major roles in the founding heritage of Ontario and Nova Scotia and by bringing the system of law and government institutions which have endured to this very day.