

Oral Questions

As a Member of the House, as is the Hon. Member, who comes from those Canadians who are not of English or French extraction, I feel proud of my country. I am proud of the Constitution, and I am proud of the Meech Lake Accord. It has done much to bind the wounds of this country and bring Quebec back into Confederation.

I know that the Hon. Member is working hard to have his Leader reverse his position and to vote against the Accord. I wish the Hon. Member would do that on the basis of a position that is justifiable, and not one which has been shown to be incorrect.

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, as a Member of this House, I too am very proud and loyal to my country.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Are you loyal to your Leader?

Mr. Marchi: As a Member of the House, and as a Canadian citizen, I would like to try to make this Constitution better. I believe we could, and I make no apologies for attempting to do that.

Leaving aside the issues in the Accord of the manner in which the country will be governed, and what shape our institutions will take in years to come, I wish to ask the Minister why he is unwilling to promote and proudly depict in the opening clauses of the Accord, the intrinsic heritage of Canadians which is proudly bilingual and proudly multicultural?

Since it is a policy of the federal Government, and a policy promoted by all provinces, does the Minister believe that the entrenchment of such a resolution and recognition in the opening clauses would hurt and dismantle the entire Accord?

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I am not questioning the motivation of the Hon. Member, and I understand the sentiment with which he indicates his point of view. I think he is wrong. The vast majority of people who have investigated this matter think there is no substance to the contention put forward by the Hon. Member.

I wish to point out to the Hon. Member a couple of things that should bring him some solace. At last we now have a whole country with Quebec as a participant in Confederation.

Ms. Mitchell: What about the Territories?

Mr. Hnatyshyn: This is an important and historic occurrence.

Secondly, we have now institutionalized constitutional discussion in our country. This means that we can build on the strengths that we have within the Charter of Rights and our Constitution.

On an annual basis we will be addressing these matters with the First Ministers to improve, where we can, the Constitution.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that the Hon. Member would do a great service to the Liberal Party of Canada by standing up and giving his unequivocal support for the Meech Lake Accord and voting for the resolution when it comes before the House.

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PENITENTIARIES

PROVISION OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, nurses, psychologists, and other professionals who work in the health care field in Canada's penitentiaries are dealing with inmates who have been involved in major crimes, including robbery, arson, and rape. Those inmates need help from competent people.

In the absence of the Solicitor General, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. Will the Government give up the bizarre idea that it can save money for the people of Canada by privatizing this service, getting rid of the people who have had experience and who know what is required, and giving the work to some poorly trained part-time workers who will create tremendous problems for the country and for the inmates?

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, in answering the Hon. Member on behalf of the Solicitor General, I have to say that the Solicitor General addressed this matter on previous occasions.

My recollection is that in the process of examining the area referred to by the Hon. Member, probably the prime consideration of the Hon. Member is the quality of service which will be given to inmates. The Hon. Member in generalizing in a rather negative way does not state the actual fact and intent of the policy. The so-called privatization can mean a more effective, sensitive and efficient delivery of services in some instances. I know this is contrary to the teachings of the New Democratic Party, but they haven't had an original thought since the 1933 Manifesto.

● (1200)

Mr. Broadbent: It is largely better than never having had an original thought.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Winnipeg North on a short supplementary question.

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Does the Minister of Justice not realize that the question I raised has been brought to the attention of the Solicitor General and the Government