

*The Constitution*

The principles that will make those ends possible are now clearly stated in a constitution that will soon be entirely our own. I believe that the great symbol of a home-forged constitution embodying our most cherished conceptions, our most prized rights, is a great breakthrough. In swift chain reaction, it will urge us toward a quiet but a profound revolution of spirit. Let me look briefly at the elements of the constitutional resolution that I believe will be the active ingredients in this revolution of spirit.

[*Translation*]

To my mind, one of the most important aspects of this resolution is that it guarantees that all Canadians will be free to settle where they want in this country. How can we have a nation if its citizens are not free to move around as they wish? Only if we can look for work, put our children in schools where they will not feel out of place and become home owners and build in any area of the country will we consider ourselves citizens of a great nation. Otherwise, we shall only be residents of hostile and restricted feudal kingdoms.

Physical obstacles to travel have virtually disappeared. We can go nearly everywhere in Canada in a single day, and in most cases, much more quickly. The only real obstacles are psychological and legal. The psychological obstacles reflect fear, apprehension and uncertainty, fuelled by perceived regional divisions. The Constitution we have been offered can only eliminate such perceptions by guaranteeing unequivocally the freedom of movement and communications. The legal obstacles are those which give special employment and ownership rights to local residents. These are certainly the most insidious obstacles, as they discriminate between citizens from one area and those from elsewhere. This can be the cause of serious divisions and great bitterness. Without mobility rights, there can be no question of the national commitment to which I referred earlier. For this principle to prevail, all Canadians must feel at home everywhere in Canada. This will promote an enlightened nationalism.

● (2040)

[*English*]

The ideal with regard to language rights would be for each person in any part of this country to choose freely which of the official languages he or she wants to use, but in reaching this ideal there must be no hint of compulsion. This, as much as anything, will be the test of our wealth of spirit in the post-patriation period. If some provinces object and say that meeting this challenge of spirit will be inconvenient, that it will involve extra expense or that it may enrage some sections of the community, then that too will be a measure of our spirit.

The third principle, that of equalization, is also to be formally recognized in the Constitution. This is a mechanism operating largely outside the glare of publicity, but it too mirrors and emphasizes the principle of mobility, in this case a mobility of opportunity. You see, the freedom to move from one place to another is the flip side of freedom to remain in one's ancestral home without penalty.

Some have argued that without protection against movement each new discovery of wealth will mean a disruptive migration of Canadians from one region to another, but this need only be a fear if Canadians do not share equally the riches they jointly own. Equalization ensures a fair distribution of wealth through the mechanism of transfer payments. This enables Canadians with strong emotional attachments to their homes to enjoy continued residence without punishing tax burdens or confined horizons. To such Canadians equalization is the tangible evidence of the neighbourly concern of their compatriots in other provinces.

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** That is well said.

**Mr. Parent:** In my view it is right that individuals should have rights which cannot be arbitrarily tampered with by government.

**Mr. Epp:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Parent:** In a sense this puts the individual above government, but it also gives the individual greater responsibility.

Responsibility and spirit are linked. What person could freely declare himself in love with his country if it offered him no fundamental rights and gave him no personal responsibility for exercising and protecting them?

[*Translation*]

I am therefore in favour of entrenching basic rights in the Constitution. I am also in favour of an amendment procedure which ensures the participation of a great majority of Canadians to any constitutional reform. Indeed, as far as the Constitution is concerned, as it is so essential to the articulation of our national spirit, the greatest number possible of citizens must be involved as directly as possible. When we have finally patriated our Constitution, we shall have a solid legal instrument to protect and promote our rights and freedoms. However, as I said earlier, it is perhaps the symbolic aspect of the Constitution which is the most important.

[*English*]

This is not to say that we are currently without home-grown symbols. As I mentioned, our flag and anthem are now recognized around the world as distinctly Canadian symbols.

**Mr. Blais:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Parent:** Niagara Falls, the Centre Block we are in now, Lake Louise, the old quarter of Quebec, the Vancouver skyline: all of these have high recognition value and symbolic content. Our current leader, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) and the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent) are all three united by a vision of a fully independent and responsible Canada. They differ on details.

With the patriation of our Constitution it is my belief that we will draw more fully on symbols and visions like these in forging our very own identity as Canadians. A Canada trans-