

Supply—Justice

to re-examine the constitution in order to bring it up to date.

I do not want to spend too much time on that problem. Those who will have to deal with it will take it upon themselves to re-examine our constitution and look at it from every angle. However, I should like to remind the Minister of Justice that, before that federal-provincial conference for the revision of our constitution is organized, there must be at least some guiding principles to inspire Canada's new constitution.

I have been given the opportunity to realize that such an idea could be the main inspiration for a new constitution. I have been aware of that since I have become a member of this house, from the time I learned about several bills put forward to deal with various problems and since I have had the opportunity to talk with members from other provinces, from this other great nation which is part of our country.

I must agree that too many French Canadians are unfortunately not familiar with the workings of the English mind. In fact, that was somewhat my case before I came here. My opinion has changed on certain points since then. However, I have become more and more attracted by an idea which could truly become the fundamental principle of a new constitution, that is that, in the future, it will be useless to consider Canada as the federation of ten provinces.

When some piece of legislation is enacted in spite of the opposition of one province, then the latter must bear the consequences.

On the other hand, if a statute is favourable to one province only, then it is the nine other provinces which suffer from its adoption.

It is my feeling that in reviewing our constitution, we will have to take into account the two nations which live side by side in this vast country of ours which goes from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Mr. Chairman, during a sitting of the miscellaneous bills committee, I got the confirmation of the allegations I am making now.

At the time, the committee was examining the bill to incorporate a national association of pharmacists. Under its new federal charter, the association would have acquired certain rights and privileges. Nine provinces were in favour of the bill to incorporate the association whose board of directors would issue licenses to qualified pharmacists. However, one province was against this legislation.

And then, if a province should decide to block passage of a bill that nine other provinces are requesting, these nine provinces will have to suffer the consequences, while if we lived in a confederation made up of two nations, enjoying more freedom, more rights

[Mr. Gregoire.]

and more privileges within the said confederation, we would not witness the clashes which are seen nowadays.

In fact, we see, for instance, that in the field of education, nine provinces welcome the centralizing of education services and that, maybe, with a view to set up better communications between them and—

The Chairman: Order. I regret to have to interrupt the hon. member, but I must say I find it quite difficult to see any relevancy between his remarks and the estimates now before the house.

Besides, I would draw the attention of the hon. member on the fact that paragraph 2 of standing order 59 reads as follows:

Speeches in committee of the whole house must be strictly relevant to the item or clause under consideration.

Now, I do not think the hon. member's remarks and the arguments he is trying to bring forward have any relevancy to the estimates now before the committee.

Mr. Gregoire: Mr. Chairman, I was under the impression that when the first item of the estimates of the Department of Justice was called we were entitled to make our views known to the house at any time.

Moreover, as the task of preserving and re-thinking the constitution, when this is required, comes under the jurisdiction of the justice department, I thought I was in order in dealing precisely with a subject which concerns particularly the Department of Justice: that is, the Canadian constitution.

However, if you are of the opinion that the ideas I submit are out of order, I shall abide by your decision.

The Chairman: I want in no way to limit the remarks of the hon. member, but I think very sincerely that the remarks he is presently making, and the arguments he has been offering to the committee in the last few minutes, do not relate closely enough or directly enough to the estimates.

Mr. Gregoire: Very well, Mr. Chairman, I shall try to find another appropriate moment to submit certain ideas concerning the revision or the rethinking of our constitution, as the Minister of Justice has expressed the wish, for some time. In fact, I want to congratulate him for his serious work in that field; that work was necessary and I am of the opinion that the revision should not be delayed too long.

Mr. Chairman, there is a last problem which I wish to raise in connection with the consideration of the estimates of the Department of Justice. It is that of bilingualism within the said department. We shall have an opportunity to ask questions on this sub-