

I move for leave to introduce a Bill, entitled an act to provide for the peaceful separation of British Columbia, seconded by any gentleman opposite who thinks it proper to do so.

As this frenzied sense of wrong is still alive in British Columbia, there is a movement of separatism which is gaining momentum and is very much alive in British Columbia. We should not ignore that. It is not a charter of rights and the entrenchment in the Constitution of the cardinal principles of democracy which are the hallmark of western democracies everywhere which will allay and correct this frenzied sense of wrong that we in the west still feel.

What is it about this charter of rights which causes all this controversy? First, I do not believe that we who are elected to this institution through the democratic process have a mandate to make the changes which are contemplated in this charter of rights. We do not have a mandate to surrender the supremacy that rests with this institution in favour of another institution.

This place was created by men of history and by the people. We are the servants of this institution, not its master. It is not for us to decide on changes that should be made to it. I defend my friend and colleague, the hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Epp), when he says that changes as fundamental as those that the Prime Minister has designed for us should be made by the people themselves in another forum than here. When he mentions the constituent assembly, that is the preferable way. Indeed, that would be the way that most modern countries which change their constitution would go about it.

We are now rewriting the Constitution completely, starting from the beginning as if this were a new society somewhere on the moon with no history, nothing to start from, and entrenching a charter of individual rights. As my friends on the other side have said, it is reasonable to question what is wrong with entrenching in the Constitution certain political and democratic rights which were, after all, the cornerstone of all the ideological foundations of the parties represented here, with the possible exception of one. The right and the liberty of the individual is the cornerstone of the ideological base of my party. I suppose it is the ideological base of what was once known as the Liberal Party.

On the surface the objective of entrenching these cardinal principles of democracy such as freedom of speech, freedom of action, freedom of thought and freedom of religion is a very laudable goal. I go further by saying there would hardly be a member on any side of this House who would not fight to protect to preserve the individual rights which are inherent in these cardinal principles of democracy.

Every one of us is almost daily confronted by a constituent who feels his rights have been offended. He asks for help in going to battle. Once we entrench these rights in the Constitution, there will be a change. If an individual phones his Member of Parliament because he has been aggrieved by an act of bigotry, that member will no longer be able to stand in this House to come to his defence. The member will probably have to tell his constituent that his rights are now entrenched in the Constitution, the Supreme Court has jurisdiction over those rights and he had better go and fight for them. Of

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course, the constituent will not know that it costs a lot of money to have his case heard in the Supreme Court. So far the Member of Parliament has been able to stand up for his rights without having to send him a bill.

What is wrong with this charter of rights that we are about to entrench in the Constitution is that it is not simply dealing with the cardinal principles of democracy. It goes much further. That is what the debate the premiers were involved in was all about. Not only does this charter of rights entrench the cardinal principles of democracy, the political rights, it also entrenches certain rights that are not within the jurisdiction and mandate of federal politicians. It entrenches certain rights of individuals in our country which are under the control of the provincial governments.

Is it not the right of provincial premiers to concern themselves about that? Should the premiers not ask what it would be like after these rights have been entrenched in the Constitution? The language right, for example, says that a person is entitled to be educated and to have his children educated anywhere in this country in English or French. It is a laudable goal to become at some future time a country that is truly functionally bilingual. This is no longer just a dream. The young children in most European countries on graduation from school are functionally bilingual. They converse in many languages, many of them are multilingual. However, to take one language and throw out all the great things we have strived for and pride ourselves in, including the concept of multiculturalism, and say that henceforth we shall be a bilingual and bicultural country is something that certainly offends me.

● (2150)

Not having had the privilege of being born in this country, I chose Canada and I thought I came here under certain conditions. Approximately one-third of our people living here today arrived in this country believing they did so under certain conditions, one of which was that this was a multicultural country. That is no longer so.

That is not the matter about which the premiers are concerned. They are concerned about the fact that there could be certain areas in eastern and western Canada where, as a result of the entrenchment in the Constitution of these rights to education, the taxpayers will have to build French or English schools, as is the case in the province of Quebec. That may not necessarily be one of their priorities. There are small communities in the constituency I represent that do not have water or sewer; they do not have a hockey arena, a library or a cultural centre, and those may be greater priorities at a particular time. We are leaving a certain vagueness in this whole scheme because we say "where numbers warrant". We say we are going to be very reasonable about this. However, it is the Supreme Court that will decide what the numbers will be. Will the numbers be 5, 7, 15 or 500 children? No one knows. The premiers and the taxpayers must know because they will have to pay the bills.

It is just not good enough for people opposite to say that because of a concern which has been expressed about certain