

## Conclusion

The agreement reached at Meech Lake envisaged a First Ministers conference on Senate reform to take place within months of proclamation of the Accord. Several governments are anxious to get on with the process. The province of Newfoundland and Labrador has a very detailed proposal for Senate reform, the government of Ontario and Manitoba have already established legislative Committees to look into this subject, the Prime Minister of Canada has stated his intention to create such a Committee to conduct hearings this summer on the basis of a comprehensive discussion paper. We continually come back to the point that unless we get over the present constitutional impasse, the prospects for Senate reform or any other constitutional change appear to be remote.

The New Brunswick Companion Resolution did not deal with Senate reform because, as Premier McKenna noted, it was an issue of more immediate interest to other provinces. We have attempted to address this priority through the idea of a sunset clause for the amending formula for Senate reform. We believe Senate reform is also of fundamental importance to the country.

**23. Your Committee recommends that Senate reform should be a priority item for the next constitutional round.**

There is less consensus than we expected about the shape and function of a reformed Senate and there is little chance of building a consensus as long as the present deadlock continues. We have proposed a way to get us over the initial impasse and to get talks started.

Once that happens we are convinced that Canadians will turn their attention to Senate reform and other outstanding items.

Finally, your Committee wants to thank all Canadians who testified or submitted briefs for their contribution. We have been profoundly affected by what we have heard during the course of our hearings. We have witnessed the extent to which Canada has been irrevocably changed by the entrenchment of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the patriation of our Constitution. Canadians, obviously, want to get on with their constitutional development. That responsibility starts, but does not end, with First Ministers. It extends to all legislators, to interest groups and to every Canadian.