

The Constitution

it created the checkerboard in its own resolution. It has now created four categories of language rights in this country; not one, but four. That is a checkerboard. Their own amending formula creates three classes of province. That is a checkerboard. I guess it all depends, Mr. Speaker, on whether it is the checkerboard you want or the checkerboard you do not want. But to raise the question of opposing an amending formula because it is a checkerboard is dishonest, not intentionally so, but dishonest.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crombie: If the Victoria Formula had been adopted in 1968 there would be no medicare and no Canada Pension Plan in this country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crombie: Behind all of that is a philosophy which is alien to this country. As I indicated, this country has always required the necessity for diversity. This government only understands the pressure of one thumb—its own. The only thing the government seems to understand is that the power must be with it. If it is with other governments then that is a difficulty.

I would like to deal with the charter and make a few comments in respect of my own feelings about it. I talked of the rights that Canadians learned about in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and, indeed, also in the twentieth century. I also indicated in my wee story about F. R. Scott that there were thousands of people—nay, hundreds of thousands—who did not have the rights which British people had. There are a great many examples of this in our Canadian history. That is why I have always been one of those who support a charter of rights. I have great hopes for that charter.

The people who came to the committee over the past four months represent the sons and the daughters, the grandsons and the granddaughters, the great-grandsons and the great-granddaughters, of all the people here before who did not have those rights. They did not know how to deal with the culture which gave its fruit, the common law. That is why in my view a charter of rights is essential in this country.

The charter needs to be two things. It must be one which will work and one which does not destroy the essentials of the country at the same time. Let me deal with that. This charter does not include the Diefenbaker preamble. It ought to since we have few enough symbols in this country. Twenty years ago this year this House adopted the Diefenbaker Bill of Rights. The preamble included not only belief in the Supreme Being and the role of the family, but included a number of things which Canadians hold dearly. We put that to the committee and the government voted it down.

● (1710)

Some hon. Members: Shame, shame!

Mr. Crombie: I would ask what is the status of the Diefenbaker preamble? We do not know, but this charter of rights does not contain the Diefenbaker preamble.

Secondly, it does not include property, as I mentioned earlier. The right to enjoy property is essential to people's understanding not only of their rights but of their freedom and security. We put a motion to include privacy as a right; and it was voted down.

The government is always talking about how interested it is in freedom of information. Well, it voted that proposal down, too.

Finally, in dealing with the charter, what impressed me was the argument that somehow throughout this whole piece the provinces are narrow provincialists who do not guard other people's interests or needs; only the federal government would do that. I guess I spent too long as a municipal politician to accept that point of view. As I said in the committee, there are hundreds of thousands of women and men in this country who work for municipalities and provinces doing the actual work of delivering the rights contained in the charter. The day the government decides it does not care how many provinces oppose and, therefore, how many municipalities are not involved, that is the day they lose touch with space ship earth, because this federal government does not deliver services to the handicapped, to women, or to those who need care and comfort. In urban areas it does not deliver services; municipalities and provinces deliver services. The charter of rights may get the Liberal Party votes but it is not going to help the people who are in need.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crombie: Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me deal with what we regard as the crucial problem. I indicated earlier the Canadian instincts for diversity, for rights, and for consensus were important. The government's resolution has no consensus. For the first time in our history we are forgetting how to go about change. We have always made change by consensus. The government now is going to move unilaterally.

They may regard that as simply a process which is not connected to the goal or to what is being done. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) says, yes, that is a bad process, hold your nose. The Minister of Justice (Mr. Chrétien) says, long after the process is over you will like the product and the process will be forgotten. The Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent) said it is time for a decision, time for change. We have to act decisively in history. I always worry about people who are going to act on my behalf for their history.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crombie: Mr. Speaker, the Canadian I would like to see in the future is one that still knows what is going on in the rear window, because this country is not like the Leader of the New Democratic Party's analogy of the United States and their civil war. The thing that has always impressed me about this