

The Constitution

Labrador. He went to places like Postville, Charlottetown, and Port Hope Simpson not only to establish churches but to make sure there were schools for the children.

Today, the Pentecostal Assemblies operate some of the most modern, efficient and progressive schools in the province. Those men are to be congratulated because they took the Bible seriously when it said, "Go ye into all the world, even unto the remotest parts". They are to be congratulated for bringing to those remote places and all places in Newfoundland not only the three Rs but a spiritual context for education.

The largest Pentecostal Assembly in Newfoundland is in Windsor, in my riding. I know they will welcome this amendment today. I say in concert with all my Newfoundland colleagues in the House that today we owe the Pentecostal Assemblies not simply thanks but praise for the work they have done in the spiritual dimension of our province, and indeed in education in our province. It is an honour and privilege for me to say that I agree with the Minister of Transport that this is a historic day for them and that we should pass this motion very speedily.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. George Baker (Gander—Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, when I made my intervention a few moments ago when the Parliamentary Secretary to the Government House Leader (Mr. Lewis) read the motion concerning this resolution, I was quite frankly thinking about the previous attempts that have been made in this chamber and the Newfoundland House of Assembly to pass this resolution.

I can recall twenty years ago the present Minister of Transport (Mr. Crosbie) being in the Newfoundland Legislature when the original resolution was passed. It came up again in the provincial legislature after the Minister of Transport had departed, I believe, in the form of a resolution to Ottawa.

It then came to the House of Commons in Ottawa some 17 years ago. Each time it died on the Order Paper. That is why I was a bit harsh with the Parliamentary Secretary when he read the motion. I do not believe anyone understood the motion he was reading and it sounded so complicated that I thought perhaps this resolution would leave the chamber, go to a committee, and probably never see the light of day again.

I understand that there is an agreement to put this resolution through today so that we will accomplish what so many people had tried before.

I can only reiterate what has already been said. The Pentecostal Assemblies of Newfoundland have been left out of that aspect of recognition that is needed under the Constitution. They are probably the most active force in education today in Newfoundland. Vocational Bible school is in full swing in various parts of Newfoundland. Children from all denominations are attending VBS. Even when the school year is over, the Pentecostal Assemblies are still active in every part

of Newfoundland and Labrador. As the Minister of Transport pointed out, they are becoming more active every day.

I do not want to delay this resolution any longer. I will be watching very carefully and will not leave the chamber until the Minister of Transport puts it through as he said he would. I do not know what the NDP will do, but they better not hold it up. I include the Official Opposition as well. In other words, there have been many attempts to put this through before. Let us settle it today. While that was not the original motion put forward, I imagine it was the intent of the motion put forward by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Government House Leader. I shall resume my seat and watch as the motion is put through the House. If any other item comes up, I will filibuster until we return to this motion and put it through.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, that is always a tough act to follow, but I want to say how pleased I am that we have been able to persuade the Liberal Members of Parliament to back down and allow this very important resolution to go through the House today. I know there was some initial reluctance on the part of the Liberals and that they perhaps wanted to talk for a couple of hours, but we in the New Democratic Party consulted with them and reminded the Liberals that it took their Government some 17 years to produce absolutely nothing.

I have consulted carefully with my colleagues in Newfoundland, including such eminent people as Jack Harris, the very distinguished labour lawyer from St. John's East, who incidentally happens to be our candidate in the federal by-election there. Mr. Harris has indicated to us that he very much regrets that for decades there was silence and inaction on this very important resolution on the part of the previous Liberal Government. I am glad we were able to persuade the Liberals to agree today to allow this motion to go through.

● (1250)

As another Member said, normally when dealing with a constitutional amendment, we would want to have some study, have it go to committee and allow witnesses to make their views known. That would be the normal course of action on a constitutional amendment. However, we have agreed in the spirit of non-partisan co-operation, after many years, that the resolution should go forth today.

I must confess some personal bias in this matter. I was adopted by a very distinguished elderly Haida woman who herself happens to be a loyal and faithful Pentecostal. She has tried hard to persuade me of the virtues of that particular religion.

Mr. Baker: It is never too late.

Mr. Robinson: And as my colleague from the Liberal Party says, it is never too late. At the time of the Union in 1949, seven denominations were specifically authorized by law to operate schools and to share in public funds. The Pentecostal Church has played a very active role in Newfoundland. I am