

Constitution of Canada should be renewed on the basis of the agreement reached on August 28, 1992?

And, in particular, while approving in principle the establishment of an elected Senate —

— which I have supported for years—

— do you agree that the proposals for changes in the Senate and the House of Commons as contained in the agreement reached on August 29, 1992 should be adopted?

● (1800)

There is so much anger in Western Canada about the powers and the numbers of Western representation in the Senate and the House of Commons that I suggest that this resolution be put in two parts. There are some acceptable proposals in the package. There are some thoughtful ideas in it. I would not like to see the whole package defeated because of anger over one section. I think it would be a constructive idea to accept my proposal for amendment.

Because of the plan to grant each province the right to veto any future changes in the Senate and certain other national institutions, the possibility of real Senate reform may be lost forever unless action is taken now to give a new elected Senate representing the regions real powers to help determine the future of this nation.

In their present form, the Senate proposals, in my view, are not good enough for Canada. Many of the package's supporters claim that while its proposals are far from perfect, on balance they represent the best compromise available at this time. However, in my personal view, change is possible, even at this late date and without compromising the full constitutional package, and thus my suggestion for a reworded resolution. At the very least, an effort can and should be made to improve the proposals relating to the Senate and to certain other sections of the package. These constitutional reform recommendations could be so much better.

**Hon. Herbert O. Sparrow:** Honourable senators, first of all, let me make it clear to Senator Murray, before he asks the question, that I am going to vote "no" on the vote today and I am going to vote "no" in the plebiscite when the time comes.

**Senator Murray:** I am glad to have such a forthright statement from you, senator.

**Senator Sparrow:** Let me just tell you why I am going to vote today against the holding of a plebiscite. I believe that by voting for that, in some way I am giving my tacit approval to the contents of the proposed constitutional changes, and I am opposed to the majority of the proposals in those constitutional changes.

I saw the government and Parliament encourage the forums across this nation to go out and listen to the people of this country. We had the Spicer Commission, the forums, and the parliamentary commission go out, and they studied for two years at great cost. They made firm proposals about a Triple-E

Senate and about many other aspects of the Constitution. It was called the Canada round.

During the course of one week, Joe Clark and the premiers got together and brought forward a proposal that did reflect to some degree what the Canadian people had told us, but that was not good enough. The Prime Minister called the premiers together again and in one week brought forth constitutional proposals that do not bear any resemblance to what the Canadian people told us they wanted. The proposals that are there for a Senate are not what the Canadian people told us they wanted.

As Senator Perrault told us, they were clearly talking about a Triple-E Senate: elected, effective and equal. We know we have not got that. We know that, instead of an effective Senate, what we will have is a reduced Senate, with extra seats going to the House of Commons.

Can you tell me how I can go back to the people of Western Canada or Saskatchewan and say, "You got a hell of a deal, guys. It's really great for you."?

We did not get the Triple-E Senate; we got something that is ineffective, and to compensate for that we are going to give Ontario and Quebec each 18 more seats in the House of Commons. Do you know that Saskatchewan only has 5 per cent of the vote in the House of Commons now? What does the new proposal do? It gives it 4 per cent of the representation, with no power in the Senate.

Who decided that we would give Quebec and Ontario 18 more seats each, or 36 combined? Who decided that? Did the Canadian people in all of those forums recommend that? No. The recommendations were for a Triple-E Senate and for the existing make-up in the House of Commons to remain the same. So who brought this idea forward?

When the Western Canadian premiers came back, Getty and Romanow, they said, "We got what we wanted." They don't know what they're talking about, because that was not what we told them we wanted.

I am supposed to go to the people and say, "Here, vote in this referendum. We are not going to tell you what is in it. We are not going to give you any text on it." Parliamentarians can have the text and they can vote on it, but we don't trust the people of Canada to have it. We do not trust Canadians with the full text of that agreement.

It is like buying a used car from Doug Everett. He says "Yes, this little old lady is coming in to buy the car. Take the thousand dollars, and then take the car and put sawdust in the transmission and the rear end and heavy oil in the motor, because she will not know the difference."

**Senator Gigantès:** Is that what he does?

**Senator Sparrow:** No, that is not what Doug Everett does. I really take that back. It was only an expression. But that is what we are basically saying to the people.

People are now going across this country saying, "Everybody gave a little." Well, tell me what Quebec gave. Tell me