

amending procedure that meets the requirements set out in the resolution, this formula and a formula similar in principle to the Victoria formula will be put to the people in a referendum. The federal government will also have the opportunity, at that time, to put forward a formula of its own choice instead of the modified Victoria formula.

If the provinces do not present an alternative formula, the modified Victoria formula will automatically come into effect two years after patriation. In general, that formula would require that amendments to the Constitution be approved by Parliament and by either the legislative assemblies or, in a national referendum, a majority of voters in a majority of the provinces, including: every province that has or has had a population of at least 25 per cent of the population of Canada; at least two Atlantic provinces, at least two western provinces with combined populations of at least 50 per cent of the population of all the western provinces.

● (2020)

The argument being used that we are asking Britain to amend our Constitution instead of doing it ourselves surely does not hold water. The proposed resolution before us is a product of Canada's Parliament. Before it reaches Britain it will have passed through both Houses of our Canadian Parliament. Many dedicated MPs and senators from all political parties have sat for days and weeks in a joint committee of both Houses to hear briefs and representations from many Canadians and particular experts. I join other members of this House in commending them and thanking them for their work.

I say to all Canadians that the proposed resolution which will be going to Britain is indeed a made-in-Canada product. As an English-speaking Canadian brought up, and having lived, in the atmosphere which I earlier described, I have always been a Canadian nationalist. I believe in a strong federal government, one that has the nation's regional interests at heart and one which is ready to sit down and exchange constructive views on a two-way street basis with the other regions of the country.

I am a Canadian federalist who, I think, has some understanding of all Canada and who wants to understand even better this great nation from coast to coast, this nation that is God's gift to us as Canadians. In this same context I say to this House and to all Canadians that a poor man is not he who is without a cent; a poor man is he who is without a dream. Our dream is to patriate our Constitution and have an amending formula.

Our daily thoughts should be elevated above the ceiling of this room. The secret of success is consistency of purpose. Even the woodpecker owes his success to the fact that he uses his head, and keeps pecking away until he finishes the job he starts.

Mr. Stevens: Look at what he does to the tree!

Mr. Hopkins: I do not know whether that was the woodpecker or the tree.

The Constitution

It has often been said that the measure of success is not whether you have a tough problem to deal with, but whether it is the same problem you had last year. Surely that is the essence of this whole exercise we are going through. This is the story of the patriation of our Canadian Constitution. We have made great strides in recent times regardless of diversity, which we hope is always a healthy process in our democracy.

The government is off to a good start with this proposed resolution and I appeal to the members of this House to give this plan a fair trial. I repeat, there will be first ministers' conferences after the Constitution has been patriated and is truly Canadian. Without having the Constitution home, time will continue to lapse. Do not forget that we as Canadian federalists, and we were proud that night from coast to coast, made a commitment to the federal supporters in the province of Quebec in last year's referendum, that we would bring in reform. At the same time, we must carry on some very sound and realistic talks with our western Canadian friends. A good two-way street must be built for that purpose and that must be an objective of all parties concerned.

I strongly believe that in this great issue surrounding our nation's Constitution we should take from the past its fires and not its ashes.

If we cannot join hands in a positive way for Canada and Canadians; if we cannot find common ground without weakening the federal government; if we cannot tackle successfully the completion of a 113-year old Constitution for Canadians and our wonderful home and its great potential, then we must learn a lesson from the author, L. P. Jacks, who said: "The pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; the optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty." If we are going to see the opportunity in every difficulty in this debate, then we cannot help but succeed.

In order to answer some of the questions from those Canadians who have requested information about the impact of the proposed resolution on our parliamentary process in Canada and the Queen as head of state—because every time some changes come up, we in English Canada are asked questions about the place of the Queen and our government institutions—I am going to take a direct quote from the introduction of the explanatory notes:

"When these proposals come into effect, they will signify the passing of the last vestige of Canada's former colonial status. The fundamental nature of our political system will not be changed: Canada will remain a parliamentary democracy with a federal system of government and the Queen as Head of State. However, now, after 113 years, we will finally have a constitution that is completely our own and that can be amended entirely within this country. The changes are also momentous in that, for the first time, Canadians will have basic rights and freedoms enshrined in and protected by the Constitution."

Let me also state there is one thing that has bothered me as a Canadian nationalist from English-speaking Canada and as one who believes in a healthy federal state, and that is that Canada is the only sovereign country in the world which still has to turn to the Parliament of another country to amend its own Constitution.

Mr. Stevens: Why are you doing it?