

*Supply*

over in 1987 when they signed the accord. But what did Meech teach us? That they were wrong, that the negotiations continued until the ratification stage. Now, Mr. Speaker, how could one reproach the Prime Minister for not being aware of this dimension of the amendment formula issue when we know it came to light with Meech? That was not mentioned and is worth repeating, because it might prevent rude and simplistic arguments to be made on what Meech was or was not.

This is a tangible proof, Mr. Speaker, that that amending formula has not served the interests of Quebec nor—and that is the point of view of this government—those of Canada.

That is why we must now find a formula that will allow us to bring about changes without risking to fail because only one or two provinces representing populations that are not always proportional to the power they have in general may stall the process. That is why then, Mr. Speaker, the role of the Beaudoin-Edwards Committee is so important—has become even more important—and why they must focus on that issue.

Mr. Speaker, the Spicer Commission will table its report on July 1st. Then, the Beaudoin-Edwards Committee will table its own; the Allaire Committee has already produced its report; the Bélanger-Campeau Commission will have taken a stand; Ontario will have taken a position in an interior report; other provinces will have done so—and so on. The Progressive Conservative Party of Canada will hold its debate in August 1991. Then, Mr. Speaker, nothing is impossible.

Even so we must not put the cart before the horse. We must take things one step at a time and then the federal government will propose an alternative to Canadians.

What is important in the short term, Mr. Speaker, is to create, invent and develop a process that will allow us to start the debate over in a context where we will be able to find solutions.

What does it ask for, Mr. Speaker? It asks for, among other things—I am not embarrassed to say it—perhaps a less macho approach than the one we had this past year. You know, the macho approach, the “yield-or-break approach”, has not often succeeded, as I see it. I do not

know of anybody who could settle all his businesses with this method. I do not know of many, Mr. Speaker.

Well, it is also true in politics. If you really want to make changes as profound as those suggested to us today, not only in Quebec, but elsewhere in Canada, let us think for a few moments about the aboriginal groups who also want profound changes. Let us think, among other things, about the people from the West who have been experiencing a feeling of alienation for several years. It does not go back ten years, but several decades.

If we sincerely want to try to solve those problems and sit with these people and start making the big changes that we long for, but which can be different for some and for others, well, we must do it in an atmosphere and a spirit of goodwill. That is our short term challenge.

That is the way things present themselves. In that context, Mr. Speaker, I frankly admit that I do not feel I have a mission today to tell Canadians that, from now on, we will only consider the discussions based on the points of view of ordinary people and on expert opinions.

I admit to you that we should not go to that extreme. We should not either lend ourselves to simplistic outlines of certain methods that could solve all our problems. There are talks about constituent assemblies. I do not have anything to say against that, Mr. Speaker, we are very open about that on this side of the House—the Prime Minister has said he was very open about that.

It has been mentioned today in the House that in Australia, the whole process did work very well. To be honest, I think it is the leader of the New Democratic Party who said that. It did work very well, except that in Australia, when they set up a constituent assembly, it did sit for ten years. It seems to me that, considering the situation, ten years is a bit long. We should think about it before undertaking that.

Secondly, that constituent assembly in Australia was comprised of only the legislators—the members of state legislatures and of the federal parliament. I am under the impression that it is not what we ask for today. I don't say that to contradict her, on the contrary. What I am trying to say with these explanations, it is that these things are never simple. They are never all black or all white. We will have to find a formula that is more like us.