

Government Orders

—to create that new Canada, adapted to conditions in the years ahead.

[*English*]

This constitutional package provides a framework within which we are able to move ahead as a united nation, diverse and different it is true, yet one nation. Now the referendum ensures that every person of voting age in Canada will have an opportunity to express his or her preference.

The referendum is not intended as a contest between those who believe in dividing Canada and those who believe in a united Canada, although there are political parties whose ultimate success can only be achieved through the dismantling of this country. This we shall resist by all democratic means, and I have no doubt, no doubt whatsoever that the cause of a united Canada will prevail.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

• (1600)

Mr. Mulroney: The question is deeper, more profound and more important than that. Basically, the referendum relates to an appreciation of what it means to be a Canadian, to the magnificent privilege that attaches to our citizenship, and the responsibilities that flow from our common values. These marvellous attributes so admired around the world cannot and should not be force-fed to anyone. You are either proud to be a Canadian or you are not. You either love Canada or you do not. No one can be obliged to do either.

Our country, Canada, has no apologies to make to anyone anywhere in the world for offering her citizens a quality of life that the United Nations has determined to be number one in the entire world.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mulroney: The quite remarkable record of success by a relatively small group of people called Canadians in bringing under control the riches and resources of half a continent, attaining one of the world's highest standards of living, with enviable social programs, a high degree of technical and academic proficiency, a pervasive dimension of tolerance throughout a vast pluralistic society,

and a full roster of individual freedoms, in itself makes it very clear that Canadians form one of the blessed nations on the face of this earth.

Politically, socially, and economically Canadians take a back seat to no one anywhere. Our democracy is as genuine and impressive as any anywhere. Our defence of liberty has been strong and consistent from our very beginnings. Our freedoms are as true and unfettered as men and women whose most noble traditions were predicated on a belief in God and an acceptance the rule of law can devise.

In recent years Canada fought the scourge of apartheid in South Africa and the blight of famine elsewhere on that continent. With the United Nations we fought against aggression in the gulf and for the cause of peace around the world. Most recently, Canada's peacekeeping troops at Sarajevo won the admiration of the entire world and our peacekeeping traditions have become deep-seated values in a very proud heritage.

Canadians have a reputation for being able to get the job done. That is the reputation we want to hold on to. It is that reputation which will be at stake on October 26 as we move to get the job done in our own country for the benefit of all Canadians and all of those who will come after us.

It is now time for all of us to find it in our hearts and in our souls to say without hesitation or doubt that a yes to Canada, a yes to this agreement, a yes to the common cause and the common values it represents is a yes, a strong, a compelling, and a powerful yes to liberating future generations of Canadians, young Canadians for decades and decades and decades to come, to liberate future generations of Canadians to achieve, to grow, to prosper, to share, and to care in a manner the world has come to know as the Canadian way.

On October 26 I invite all Canadians to answer history's call by saying yes to a renewed Canada whose benefits, God willing, will flow to our children and grandchildren and theirs for generations and generations to come.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.