

*Government Orders*

well as a great many organizations from all parts of Canada.

[*English*]

This Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons, which my colleagues and I hope will be extremely successful, is getting off to a shaky start. One newspaper columnist has called this committee "Mulroney's new illusion". He goes on to say: "It is entertaining a dangerous illusion to imagine that a committee created in desperation will succeed where for so long all of the specialists have failed", and all of the previous efforts over the last 30 or more years have failed.

As I have indicated, this committee has a narrow focus. It deals primarily with the amending formula. It could in fact lead us, unfortunately, into error because that is not the major question. It is an important question, but not the major one. To us, it is the division of powers, looking at what each level of government can do that we must in fact tackle. The focus of the committee should be on the sharing and the redistribution of powers. It must be because that is the challenge, the reform of federal institutions, such as the reform of Parliament, clearly the Senate, no doubt the House of Commons could come in for some reform, as well as possibly the Supreme Court of Canada.

[*Translation*]

As a party, we insisted on the sharing of powers, not only on the constitutional amending formula, because we felt it was truly the key element, the number one challenge today for our country.

[*English*]

Let me talk about shared powers. Members will know that there are clear powers for the federal government, and as well, clear powers for the provincial and municipal governments. In fact, these powers for the national government are clearly defined in the Constitution Act, 1867. Let me give just a few examples.

There is very little debate about defence, currency and postal services. These are all in the national government's mandate, if you wish, they are in the federal jurisdiction. Here are some examples of some which are in the provincial jurisdiction: the laws governing property rights, municipal institutions, local works, regulating the issuance of local licences, the creation of municipal

infrastructures, etc. There are, however, many areas where the lines have become blurred and therein lies the challenge, therein lie the difficulties, and therein lies the need for debate, discussion, and study.

In the area of health, the federal government makes a large contribution to the health of Canadians through the provinces and imposes, and justifiably so, certain standards and criteria that need to be met and adhered to. There is a significant decrease in the contribution, I might say, by the federal government to health and education. In education, there is still a substantial contribution, as it should be, but because there is a contribution from the federal government and because education is a provincial constitutional responsibility, there is some blurring, some confusion, some difficulty. The area of culture is another such challenge.

Aboriginal rights, while primarily federal, still have some implications for the provincial and municipal infrastructures. Immigration, again this is a blurred area and one that needs to be sorted out. We have international trade, communications, and the list goes on.

[*Translation*]

Concerning shared powers, I believe that what is of prime importance for me and my colleagues is to understand that some powers belong exclusively to the national government. Other powers belong to the provinces while others of course belong to the municipalities. In some areas, it is perfectly clear. For instance, National Defence belongs unquestionably to the federal government. On the other hand, all legislation dealing with property rights mainly belong to the provinces. On the other hand, there are some areas where the lines have become blurred, such as health, education, culture, native rights, immigration, trade and communication which should be examined to determine exactly who must assume responsibility.

[*English*]

Again I repeat, and I want to accentuate, the real issue is not the amending formula. It is one issue, it is an important issue. The real issue is shared power. I have tried to capture that element, that message, with the following question: how can the various levels of government best reorganize so that they best respond to the needs of all Canadians, wherever they live in this great