

*The Constitution*

either the province or various groups, to ensure better representation in the upper chamber, at the regional level and at the legitimacy level.

Concerning the amendment procedure, my colleague from Montmorency-Orléans studied the question. In my view the basic question is that the Victoria charter enshrines a perpetual Quebec veto, and I must indicate on this matter that I have a rather regional approach. Despite submission by the Quebec government that there exists in any case a convention under which no constitutional amendment can be approved without Quebec's agreement, there is no such obligation either in fact, in practice, in law or in our books. Under the Victoria charter it would finally exist. I need not remind my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, that for Quebec this is vital, considering that famous difference referred to on language, cultural and other levels, to have at least on these questions—and eventually some veto might be considered for those matters only, but this is another story—to have a final veto as I said on any amendment depriving it in effect of the tools needed to promote its own difference at the cultural and language levels.

Further, I understand very well the frustration of some of my colleagues from other provinces that do not have that veto. In that respect, the Victoria formula is not perfect. But the alternative is a consensus, some other type of formula. In any event, the provinces—and this in my view ultimately justifies the proposed amending formula—will have two years to agree among themselves on an acceptable formula. I listened with interest the proposal made by the hon. member for Edmonton East (Mr. Yurko) in his contribution. He was then advocating a regrouping based on population rather than a regrouping on a regional basis. A group of provinces which would account for 25 per cent of the population anywhere in Canada would then have a veto right. I must admit that I very much agree with this formula, which is in my opinion a better arrangement than the one suggested here which has a purely regional basis. Let me give you one simple example, Mr. Speaker. Let us assume that Newfoundland has jurisdictional problems concerning its offshore resources, would it not be logical for this province to join in a common front with Alberta and Saskatchewan, for instance? On the other hand, British Columbia, faced with fishing problems, could join in with New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

In summary, regional considerations are sometimes artificial. I like the formula put forward by the hon. member for Edmonton East. With respect to the referendum, I believe, or the deadlock-breaking mechanism, again I shall be voting against amendment put forward by the Progressive Conservative Party. Why? Because I believe there must be some kind of constitutional deadlock-breaking process. Besides, I would certainly agree to give all the provinces an equal right to resort to the referendum process should there develop a deadlock. In fact, as you know it, Mr. Speaker, insincerity knows no such preferences that it should always be on the same side.

I am about to conclude, Mr. Speaker. At the very beginning of my speech, I referred to the Pascalian wager; that is, whether unilateral action on the one hand and the temporary consecration of this seniority federalism on the other hand were justified in the present situation. As far as I am concerned, the Pascalian wager goes along the following lines: Should I vote against it, or in other words, should this resolution be defeated in the House, we shall be going back to the September conference, to the failure of constitutional talks, and being a realistic man, I do not agree with those who say that the exercise can be started afresh. The bona fide commitment which followed the Quebec referendum did not succeed in overcoming these problems, in bringing about a consensus. I do not see how we could succeed now. On the other hand, this constitutional bid for power, Mr. Speaker, can lead to either one of two things: either it fails and the bitterness created by this proposal would therefore put us right back to square one. And then, we will have as well a failure on our hands. So, and that is my contention, Mr. Speaker, this "coup de force", will bring about a change. How will that be effected? Within two years, we will have an amending formula which will be either good or bad, but that is not the point. The point is that we will have an amending formula which can be used to improve things. By then, we will have the will to use that new tool to make changes be it only to react against the negative attitude of some people about the content of the formula. This is my view, Mr. Speaker, I have no other choice.

My colleague from Montmorency-Orléans said that he would rather have the status quo than the resolution. I say that this resolution is better than the status quo and that is why, in spite of very serious reservations, I will vote for it. In closing, I would like to add a few comments about Clause 133. I know that some hon. members from Ontario on this side of the House have serious reservations about the lack of a provision in the resolution, making 133 applicable to and enforceable in their province.

It is to be hoped, Mr. Speaker, that the election soon to be held in that province will give those on the provincial political scene a more generous view of the voters they wish to win over, and that they will not resort to hiding behind a hypothetical backlash for the purpose of discarding their responsibilities. In this regard, I congratulate Mr. Hatfield for his action, which I believe to be such that it will contribute to the progress of the constitutional debate. Mr. Speaker, I shall close with a quotation. As you know, the Quebec members of this House have been accused by their fellow Quebecers of being traitors. As much as I accept such criticisms—somewhat like an artist will accept any criticism, whether good or bad—I still find them hurtful and painful. I therefore want to close by quoting from remarks made by the hon. Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin) on October 21, 1980, as reported on page 3892 of *Hansard*:

Compromise, said the late Hon. Guy Favreau, is "the meeting point between the thoughts of two intelligent beings". As John Kennedy wrote in "Profiles in Courage":