

The Constitution

obligation of the Chair to take into consideration any amendments such as the present one and to give a ruling on them as quickly as possible. I would propose that the debate continue and that a ruling will be prepared within the next few moments.

Hon. William Rompkey (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I do not have time to deal with all of the remarks of the hon. member for Carleton-Charlotte (Mr. McCain), but I should like to deal with one point because it affects my constituency so much. He somehow implied that voting for this motion, as we did today, those of us from Atlantic Canada and from Newfoundland somehow voted against the transmission of hydro through Quebec to market. I want to tell him that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) is on public record at the first ministers' conference—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Rompkey: —as saying that the federal government is totally behind the province of Newfoundland in the transmission of hydro through Quebec, providing a market can be found for that power. It is quite clear it in no way affects this vote at all.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rompkey: I wanted to speak about that point, but also I want to address myself to the resolution before us. We are discussing here the foundation of our future. We have an opportunity to set down the ideals on which our way of life is based.

We may have thought that we were creating a country in 1867, but surely a modern and independent country must have a constitution of its own and the power to change that constitution, a constitution which sets down for all time the rights of individuals. That is what this motion is all about. It seeks to ensure that Canadians everywhere have the fundamental freedom that people in other free nations enjoy; that people have the democratic rights to which they are entitled; that there be no discrimination in this country on the basis of race, ethnic origin, colour, religion, age or sex; that the citizens of the English and French-speaking minority in any province have the right to educate their children in that minority language wherever numbers warrant; that mobility rights ensure the right of every citizen to move freely from one province to another, to establish a residence and to seek a job anywhere in Canada.

Our people—and I am talking of the people in Newfoundland and Labrador—no matter where they are, where they were born or what their ethnic origin, have never been confined to a particular region of the country. Our people have been free to go where fortune beckoned them. Before confederation between Newfoundland and Canada, Newfoundlanders travelled the oceans of the world, crossing the sea to a variety of foreign lands in pursuit of trade and commerce. They came to know many countries, and many countries came to know them as seamen and businessmen.

Since confederation in 1949, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have travelled to all parts of Canada—to Fort McMurray, to Toronto, to Calgary, and to Galt. They have settled, raised their families and pursued their careers. In doing so, they have made themselves not less Newfoundlanders but all the more Canadians. It is true some of them have gone of necessity and have regretted that necessity, but others have gone through choice. Of the latter some have obtained the highest offices in this land. Yet, certainly the effect of the present provincial regulations would be to confine our people to the province.

Surely if Newfoundland would keep other Canadians out, it stands to reason other provinces would be forced to keep out Newfoundlanders. The outcome of that policy would be to balkanize, to build walls, to restrict Canadians to a region. This is clearly wrong. This country belongs to all of us; not just a part of the country but all of Canada. Each of us should be free to move and to settle in any part.

Mr. Clark: Who wrote that speech?

Mr. Rompkey: This freedom must be written for all time in our constitution.

The present government proposal also establishes in the constitution the principle of equalization. If any province in confederation has benefited from this policy, surely it has been Newfoundland and Labrador. There is no Newfoundlander today, no Labradorian today, not a single one of us from Cape Chidley to Cape Race, whose life is not immensely better because we are today Canadians. At the present time 60 per cent of the provincial budget comes from Ottawa. Of course this does not include the individual transfer payments such as family allowance, unemployment insurance and pensions, which are an attempt to equalize the financial situation of individuals.

People in provinces want to be able to stand on their own two feet through income from the development of their own resources. But, until such time as this can be accomplished, they have a right to expect that the resources of the nation are used to ensure their services are up to a reasonable standard, for the fundamental principle of confederation is sharing, and the manifestation of that principle is the program of equalization.

The inconsistency of the provincial government of Newfoundland mystifies me. Are they saying that by rejecting this resolution they are rejecting the principle of equalization? Quite clearly they are firmly rejecting the measure before the House of Commons at the present time. We know they have rejected the federal government offer of 100 per cent of the revenue which would normally accrue to a province from oil production. I am at a loss to know exactly what they want. Certainly they want to sustain their rhetoric; they want to rattle sabres; they want to hunt headlines; they want to bicker with the federal government.

I believe the people of Newfoundland understand the need for a strong national government. They are aware of the individual benefits such a government can provide, and I have