

The Constitution

We have such diverse goals and dreams, yet we expect both levels to pursue our dreams. Of course, the provincial level looks much more at regional dreams, the closer to home aspirations and things which have a close relationship interest. The second level, the national government, deals in a sense with our broader goals and our broader dreams. But that is not to say that the federal government alone acts for our national interests. The provinces, too, can act in our national interest, although this government would have us believe that only it can act in the national interest.

These two levels, each sovereign, each pursuing regional and national goals, make us a federal state and not a unitary state. We are a partnership, a cohabitation, a nation of different people from different regions coming together. We cannot escape that fact. Yet these people living together in harmony is the essential spirit of consensus and co-operation. It is that same essential federalist spirit. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) himself is well aware of what the spirit of federation is.

In 1964, in a speech at the Charlottetown conference when the Prime Minister was still a professor of law at McGill, he defined our federation as follows:

Federation is by its very essence a compromise and a pact. It is a compromise in the sense that when national consensus on all things is not desirable or cannot readily be obtained, the area of consensus is reduced in order that a consensus on some things can be reached. It is a pact or quasi-treaty in the sense that the terms of that compromise cannot be changed unilaterally. That is not to say that the terms are fixed forever: but only that in changing them, every effort must be made not to destroy the consensus on which the federated nation rests.

He seemed to know what he was talking about. Has he now either forgotten what he once said or has he decided we should not remain a federation? Has he decided we should not remain a nation of consensus or a nation of co-operation? Instead, he wants us to be a nation of one government rule, a government that needs not to consult nor seek consensus. Instead of a government that would take those differences and turn them into a unifying force, this government is turning those differences into a divisive force. It is turning us away from the path of federalism, for if there is no consensus, there is no federation, as professor Trudeau himself stated in 1964. What there was then, and what we have now, is unilateral action. We have a unitary government with no goal either of consensus, or attempts, as the Prime Minister then put it, to "limit the field of consensus".

The question must be asked: What will the end result of unilateral action be? As the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chrétien) stated in a speech to this House on February 17, 1981, will it be that Canada will be "compensated" once the "strike and the discord and abuse" of this government's unilateral action is behind us? Will unilateral action forever sweeten future relations, as the Minister of Justice would have us believe? Will it create a mood that will lend itself to future consensus? Or will unilateral action forever taint future federal-provincial relations? Will it forever entrench a prevailing mood of tension? Will we become a wholly unitary state? These are all interesting questions and time will tell. But now is the time for us to look at the results of that.

First, I would like to read a passage from the infamous Kirby memo which outlined the possibilities for the federal government on federal-provincial negotiations on the Constitution. On unilateral action by the government, we read in the memo:

Ministers should understand that the fight in Parliament will become very, very rough.

So much for spirit of consensus and co-operation. So much for the rewards of federalism. This "very, very rough fight" will no doubt leave a bitter taste in our mouths, a taste which will not easily be forgotten. How does this government defend unilateral action? This government says that unilateral action first is okay because it is the voice of the people, that the government has been given a mandate and therefore it is carrying out the will of the people. The government says also that it has the support of western Canada because of the NDP alliance.

Neither of those points holds water. On the first point I would remind hon. members opposite that a voter's mandate is given and applies only to a program on which the successful party campaigned, plus the administration of public affairs. As I remember, the February "18-cent election" was not a July 1 deadline election. On the second argument, that of NDP support, we all know how slipshod that support is. We know that most members of the NDP are not speaking for their constituents, they are speaking only for their leader, the hon. member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent) who, in turn, is just another mouthpiece for the Prime Minister.

What does the real NDP voice for the west say, the voice from Saskatchewan of Premier Allan Blakeney? He has said:

Should we not try to ensure that patriation, if it goes ahead, is accomplished in a way that minimizes dissension? Will it serve Canada's interests, at this point in our history, to compound division with division?

That is the voice from Saskatchewan. The same thing is being repeated by the premiers in Manitoba, in Alberta and in British Columbia. Division upon division, that is the result of unilateral action. If we multiply that division upon division by decades, we can see the result of this unilateral action down the road. We can see what it would be like to turn this nation into a unitary state.

Even the ghosts of constitutional reform past against unilateral action are beginning to rear their heads. For instance, we awn look back at the Fulton-Favreau white paper. This was a Liberal task force. In that white paper we read:

The Canadian Parliament will not directly request an amendment directly affecting federal-provincial relations without prior consultation and agreement with the provinces.

That is what was said by Liberals not so very long ago, yet these Liberals do the exact opposite. They do not seek agreement with the provinces. There is no agreement, but they do not care. There is no consensus, but again we hear them say "who cares?" I care, Mr. Speaker. Canadians care. What we do not care for is unilateral action.

However, the Prime Minister creates the illusion that he does care. For example, on November 5, 1980 the Prime