

The Constitution

able to discriminate against women, against young women, against girls. We find that totally offensive in this year of 1981.

In changing the original resolution with this act, we have taken a step backward, reversing completely the progress we had made in recent years. The progress toward achieving greater equality for women has, to understate it, not been exactly exciting. However, we have made and have been making up until this document some changes. However, when we put into a constitutional document written in 1981 the principle of inequality, what are we doing? We are not simply pausing or stalling; we are turning things backwards, we are institutionalizing inequality, and we cannot accept that.

We must restore the original positive wording of Section 28 which ensures the paramountcy of the principle that men and women are equal. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned his intention of moving an amendment. We had the same proposal, so it would be totally redundant for us to do that. I simply indicate that the amendment will have our full support, if for no other reason than that in the original document we wrote it in the first place.

I want to turn now to aboriginal children in the same schools, looking at the same document. Consider the children in Old Crow, Inuvik, on the reserves or in schools in the cities of western Canada where many of our native people have come in recent years. What would those young Indian children think when looking at that document on the wall, given their heritage, especially when they know that this land was once their land? How did they lose it? They lost it by violence, treaties or trickery. They know in their bones that is what happened to them as a people in the northern part of North America, and with much more violence in the southern part. It is impossible for a white person to put himself in the skull of a young Indian child and know what is going on in his or her mind. What will happen when they hear, as they will in their schools, about this process and when they see the kind of documents we know will be sent out that will be put on the school walls in Old Crow or in Inuvik? In this context, I would like to say I was at a meeting in Alberta a week ago with Indian leaders. I heard a whole series of them. Many of them I had met previously. I agree with what the Minister of Justice and Attorney General said, because—and I want to say that in passing—some of the leadership in the Indian community is no better or worse, I suspect, than the leadership in the political parties of Canada.

● (1520)

Mr. Trudeau: And in the CLC.

Mr. Broadbent: And in the CLC, I will agree with the Prime Minister. I would also ask him to agree with me that the same is true of the Chamber of Commerce as well.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: The point I want to make is that, having sat for an hour over breakfast and listened to the Indian leaders—and I heard the legal arguments before—I agree with them. But perhaps because I heard them before, I was not overly

moved. There was an older man there who had kept silent. He was not one of the young, educated Indian lawyers nor, for all I know, was he one of the chiefs. I apologize to him through the House if he was in fact one of the chiefs of one of the bands from Alberta. Just before we broke for breakfast he spoke to me in a very low voice. He said, "I don't know what you are going to do in Ottawa. I don't know if we're going to get our rights, as I think we should have had them"—and he was an older man—"—but I do know that my grandchildren will be very upset if we don't get our treaty rights". Then there was complete silence. That is all he had to say. He did not say it in a threatening tone, nor as a political bottom line, nor with animosity. There was almost a sense of pathos about what he did have to say, Madam Speaker. If I understood him correctly, he was saying, "My generation of Indians has had it. We have gone through it and we did not get the rights." He said to me as a white Canadian politician, "You have to think of the young Indians who are coming along."

That is my special plea today, Madam Speaker. It is a plea I am making in the House of Commons and to the premiers. I have talked to more than the majority of them during the past ten days. I know there are more than the majority of the premiers who are willing to entrench aboriginal and treaty rights. I know we are short of one or two premiers. I say that they must come forward so that we can send this document to England so that it will provide justice for our native people.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: I will not be moving an amendment on this subject today because one of our subsequent speakers will do that, Madam Speaker. The obvious force of the points that I have just made is that Clause 34 as written in the original resolution should be restored to the document before the House.

I want to conclude by saying that it is very rare in politics that a nation or a group of politicians is given the opportunity to make a historic decision that can be both practical and decent, that can be at once just and prudent. We in Canada are now on the threshold of such a decision. To follow through, we must now fully entrench treaty and aboriginal rights.

A number of us have already said that the resolution before us is not perfect but it is good and requires improvement. The improvement, in my judgment, would add integrity to Parliament's treatment of men and women and to our treatment of the aboriginal peoples of Canada.

In the final analysis, national unity is not about federal-provincial relations, or the relations between different regions as abstract entities; it is about people. All of the people must be treated with integrity in this document. National unity, when we talk about provinces, is one thing. National unity, when we talk about the relationships of people, is what really counts.

I want to conclude by saying that national unity without integrity is not possible. I hope our goal in this debate, before the final vote is taken, is to achieve that national integrity.

[*Translation*]

Mr. D. M. Collenette (York-East): Madam Speaker, I am very glad to speak in such a historic debate. I have been saying