

*The Constitution*

government members referred to the Diefenbaker Bill of Rights. They said, "We are the party of rights and entrenchment." I agree with that, but the Diefenbaker Bill of Rights had the property rights proposal contained within it. Today's proposal is one that remains silent and muted, leaving a serious gap, far from a perfect charter of rights, one that we might expect to have. Not only is this charter not perfect, it is not even as perfect as we can make it.

I was born and raised on the prairies of Saskatchewan. Like many others, I served my country in time of war and in peace. I am a Canadian. Any Canadian Constitution which does not give me the same rights as all other Canadians to live, work, invest and do business and, indeed, to hold and enjoy property in any part of this country is deficient and discriminatory.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Reid (St. Catharines):** Rather than have this charter be of the people, for the people, the approach taken is that the government grants rights and individual freedoms. We on this side of the House do not subscribe to that view but, rather, to the view that the citizens of our country have rights simply because they are people, human beings created in the image of God. They have certain inalienable rights. No government, no matter what the system, particularly the democratic system under which we live, should take those rights away from us. The right to own and enjoy property is one of them.

What this government seems incapable of understanding is that it is one thing to give people a Constitution, but it is another to give them one which they respect, a Constitution they can respect because they have had some part in developing it or in the process of the drafting or adoption of it. There are many such processes which can be accepted. But I submit that such a charter and, indeed, a Canadian Constitution should be the subject and the result of the deliberations of a broad cross-section of Canadians. Only then will we be able to say that we have a Canadian Constitution made by and for Canadians.

The Fathers of Confederation set a monumental task for themselves. They structured a nation from the wilderness. They established two levels of government which were to act as partners in the building of a new nation. Their task was to form the union and they did their job well. It is now our task to hold it together.

The Government of Canada and the provinces have long held that through confederation each of them has benefited. The greatness and diversity of this land and its people should never be undermined or reduced, for in that act of diversity lies the very strength of this nation. At times it will cause conflict and perhaps not promote rapid change, but that is a necessary concession which must be made to the greater good of all.

Change in the structure of Canadian politics has always been gradual. Change in Canada has not been the birth of conflict and violence. Canadians are a patient people. They will not accept change if the result of it is contrary to their wishes. We should bring the Constitution home and we should do it now. As Canadians we should gain the independence in

form which we have enjoyed so long in fact. Then the opportunity will be ours, as a mature and responsible nation, to make the kind of change the people of this country would propose. That is what being independent really means. That is the Canadian mosaic. The Canadian people themselves may not be perfect but they deserve the chance.

Let me say here that no matter what form the resolution might take as it goes from this Parliament to Westminster, be it good, bad or indifferent, it is my hope that it would be endorsed there and returned to us, as Canadians, to work out our own future, to work out our own salvation as we see fit, in accordance with our own responsibility as a sovereign nation. But the fault will lie with this government if it embarrasses this country and Great Britain by the package it is submitting.

History will judge our actions with respect to this resolution. I can say without equivocation that I am proud of my leader and of my party for the stand they have taken. I am convinced it is the position of the majority of Canadians since it is, as Mr. Diefenbaker would say, "on the side of right."

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Laverne Lewycky (Dauphin):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to participate in this debate. I will be taking a conciliatory approach in my remarks, one of building and working together, an approach which I would like to see all members in this House take, as other members of my party have taken.

I would like to emulate one of my colleagues, the hon. member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie), who loves to read the prophets. I would like to quote a phrase from the great prophet Isaiah who said, "Come, let us reason together." That is the encouragement that I wish to give.

In the course of this debate there has been division and rancour, but our party has taken the approach of reasoning together. Division, of course, is not unexpected. As the leader of the New Democratic Party, the hon. member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent), stated, there was division in 1867 and there has been division in other countries. I do not find that human nature changes when it comes to expressing strong opinions.

I have been a bit disappointed by the arrogance and unreasonableness displayed by the government in some respects. We must not be arrogant or unreasonable in return; I think we ought to reason together. We can do this by looking for common ground, things that we can agree on and ways in which we can reason together. I think we have found some of these areas, and patriation is one of them. Every party agrees that the Constitution should be patriated. As an analogy, look at the way we grow up. As an adolescent we probably had a learner's licence to drive a car and when we grew older we were able to have our own driver's licence. This is what the patriation of the Constitution is about. We are saying we are past the stage of adolescence, we have reached adulthood, and let us have our own driver's licence.

I would like now to deal with the charter of rights. It is true there is not unanimity with respect to whether or not we