

(3) the process is genuinely balanced, without real or perceived dominance or manipulation by any participant;

This feeds on the paranoia of some who think that there is a lot of manipulation right and left going on behind the curtains. If I may, Mr. Speaker, I should like to share with you a secret, provided it does not go any further. If only governments could indulge in as much manipulation as we are led to believe there are days when I would feel re-assured. It would mean that we might be able to do things in some areas where we sometimes feel totally powerless and unable to act. I wish there were as much manipulation as they seem to believe. I should like to re-assure them today by telling them that most of the time the manipulation is a figment of their imagination instead of a reality based in facts. However, this is their own problem, and there are professional people who can cure such disorder. This is the case of the Hon. Member for Gaspé who is here.

Finally, through number 4 which is one of the best, Mr. Speaker, the motion ask the House for change which ensure—

(4) discussion is based on the views of ordinary people and expert opinion;

Ms. Copps: That is quite good!

Mr. Charest: The honourable representative of the Liberal Party says that it is good and that she supports it. Frankly, I should like to tell her that if there are views in Canada which are neither those of ordinary people nor expert opinion, I wish she would tell me where they come from. They certainly do not grow on trees!

Some hon. members: From extra-terrestrials!

Mr. Charest: I do not think that they would fall from the ceiling either. Well, I do not know. I do not think I have been elected by my constituents to tell Canadians that from now on, we are going to accept only the views of ordinary people and expert opinion and nobody else. I do not see where else we could get these views.

An hon. member: We are ordinary people.

Mr. Charest: They may be able to tell us at some point, for this debate is far from over.

Fifth point: The process of constitutional change should ensure a timetable and a commitment. I suggest

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that in politics, events always dictate. We shall see. Again, I do not feel pressed enough by events to try and set up from the start a timetable. They want an open and transparent process—we have nothing against that—and discussions begun with only one precondition, a desire to remain within a renewed Canadian federation.

Mr. Speaker, all this leads me to believe that we must understand the situation we are in today. Meech did not work. We were then confronted to a failure, a constitutional failure. So, each at our level, in our jurisdictions, our provinces, we must go back to the people we worked with, evaluate our situation and then come back to the negotiation table. This is where we are at, Mr. Speaker. Meech failed more than 200 days ago. We had to give ourselves time to turn ourselves around, as we say. Quebec did just that. It set up the Bélanger-Campeau Commission. The Liberal Party in Quebec produced the Allaire Report. Other political parties also engaged in discussions and reflexions. The same thing was done within the Progressive Conservative Party. We will hold a general meeting in August 1991. The federal government set up the Spicer Commission precisely to talk with the Canadian people.

I do not know what could be more democratic than to go out and talk with tens of thousands of Canadians, after the people had requested just that. At the same time, we set up the Beaudoin-Edwards Committee—with the support of the opposition parties, by the way, except for our colleagues far back—to examine an extremely fundamental issue, that is the amendment formula.

Why focus specifically on the amendment formula? Because, Mr. Speaker, the Meech episode taught us that the amending formula that was really put to test for the first time in those negotiations served neither the interests of Canada or that of Quebec. It is important to mention this, and I will repeat it, this formula did not serve the interests of Canada.

Through this experience, we came to realize that the amendment formula had dimensions that the Canadian people as well as the legislators were unaware of and that appeared when we tried to have the accord ratified. I will give you an example, if I may. The Prime Minister and most premiers believed that the negotiations were