

*Supply*

We as Canadians have reached a point in our comparatively short history where we are once again taking an honest and sincere look at ourselves, at our successes, at our failures, at our strengths and at our weaknesses. We are looking ahead to where it is that we wish to go as a country, what this country can offer Canadians, and what Canadians can offer to the world.

I have introduced the motion before us today because I believe in Canada and because I want more than anything else for this country to emerge as a united, strong, and compassionate country from this current period of uncertainty. To do this will require significant changes in the way the government and others approach the questions of national unity and constitutional reform.

That is what we are addressing today in this motion.

First on the question of national unity, it is important to realize that it will take much more than constitutional amendments to secure the future of the nation and to ensure that the Canada we want to build for our children is a more caring, compassionate and co-operative nation. It takes more than a constitutional amendment to ensure that we build a Canada in which all Canadians feel at home and that all the world respects and admires.

It will take major economic initiatives, because economic initiatives are not solely designed to make Canada a better country for multinational corporations and corporate profit, but rather to make Canada a better place for Canadian families and a better country for the families of this nation.

It will take a major commitment to building and strengthening the nation's social programs such as medicare, old age pensions and social security. It will take a commitment to national institutions, those institutions that represent the common bonds that we share: the CBC, VIA Rail and the RCMP.

It will take courage to bring in a real environmental program that protects the Canadian environment rather than simply shields corporate polluters.

It will take constitutional change, but not constitutional change that is designed only to meet the needs of governments or the needs of corporations. For Canadians, the debate on national unity is not about which level of government should be more powerful. It is not

about who has the larger deficit or about where and how corporations can best operate and profit.

Canada is not simply a Gross Domestic Product, a deficit or a trade zone. Canada is a nation with a heart, with a soul, and a new Constitution must be for all Canadians, all the people of Canada.

[*Translation*]

It is because the Constitution must belong to the Canadian people that the redefinition of federalism must be an open and democratic process. Constitutional changes must be brought upon so as to be construed as legitimate by the people concerned. Our recent failures should have taught us that much. The processes which produced the constitutional accords of 1981, 1987 and 1990 caused discontent.

Whatever their respective merits, these accords were seen as a breach of confidence by those who were excluded. From this discontent sprung today's distrust. The fault does not lie with the country itself or with the people of Canada. It lies with the leaders and the governments. Successive governments waited before vesting powers in the Canadian people and giving them the tools to make a better life for themselves. They undermined the confidence the people had in them and in their country.

For decades, governments in Ottawa made many people believe that the federal government was either unable or unwilling to meet the needs of the population. People were also convinced that Ottawa was unable to respect diversity, contribute to equity, empower the population or simply unite the country.

[*English*]

This government has been telling Canadians that the biggest obstacle to justice, equality and prosperity is the federal government itself: deregulation, privatization, the U.S.-Canada trade deal. This government has destroyed national institutions like the CBC and VIA Rail. It is in the process of killing medicare and has virtually given up its regional development as a key tool for developing unity, and that must change.

Now we are told that the Prime Minister, Conservative, Liberal and Social Credit premiers, and large corporations have united in a constitutional alliance that talks about decentralized federalism but promises to