

lation of 400 million or 500 million, is able to function. However, upon returning to Canada, coming through customs I found that an election was taking place which was basically being fought on the language issue. I said at that time, "What has happened to our country?" I did not understand why we were not able to accept each other with only two languages when a member of the Commonwealth is able to live with a diversity which is incomprehensible to Canadian minds.

I think it is extremely important to have an openness. There should not be the fear of someone forcing a language on anyone. I think we must be consistent in accepting the historical realities of our country and that the rights of minorities are guaranteed. Minority rights were established in 1870. The English were probably in the minority at that time.

I am sorry the Manitoba Government was not able to solve the question earlier this year with the help of the federal Government and others, but I do hope sincerely that it will be solved in the near future.

Hon. David Crombie (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to be able to participate in the debate today, particularly because I was able to have the opportunity of hearing the Hon. Member for Provencher (Mr. Epp) who spoke so eloquently. I have heard him speak before on matters pertaining to the Constitution of this country. But, I might say that that is the best speech he has given. It was an outstanding and eloquent speech regarding his own province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crombie: I only have two or three minutes and I do not know that I need to embellish the arguments which were made by the Hon. Member for Provencher. However, I wanted to make a contribution which would remind us of the process we went through when we dealt with the much larger constitutional amendment. Like the Hon. Member, I was a member of the Constitution Committee.

During that time we heard people from across the country. We talked about the amending formula, and we talked about the importance of ensuring that the regions of the country, as well as its different cultures, felt a part of it all. At the end of the process, one of the most interesting things happened. We insisted that the matter be sent to the Supreme Court of Canada, before it proceeded to the United Kingdom. We insisted for months that that happen, and ultimately that is where it went.

After some weeks, the Supreme Court came down with its decision. It was probably the most Canadian judicial decision which I have had the pleasure of reading. To anyone who has not had the opportunity or has not taken the opportunity to read it I may say that it is not merely a judicial decision, it is probably one of the most impressive statements of what is in reality the Canadian political and constitutional process. It ended up by making a key judgment. It said that the Government's constitutional package was legal, but that it was not legitimate. I do not think that there is another country in the world which would understand that statement. In most coun-

tries, including the republic to the south, if it is legal it is also legitimate. However, the Canadian political process for 250 years, and certainly since 1791, has always included an understanding that legality by itself does not confer legitimacy. What does confer legitimacy is the process of involving consensus.

Consensus in this country is a process which allows laws to be legitimate. That, of course, is what the Hon. Member missed entirely in his motion. The motion which the Hon. Member brought forward to the House today is unwise. It is not only unwise, it is trouble-making. It acts in a way which is totally outside of the constitutional process of the country. Therefore, it seems to me that the important thing to understand, if one is sincerely interested in ensuring the equality of the two founding languages, is that Canadians for generations have insisted that it be done according to a process. That is offended by my hon. friend when he brings forward this motion—

● (1800)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): I regret to interrupt the Hon. Member, but the hour provided for consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 45 deemed to have been moved.

IMMIGRATION—REFUSAL OF VISITORS' VISAS TO APPLICANTS DENIED LANDED IMMIGRANT STATUS

Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity): Mr. Speaker, on May 18 I addressed a question to the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Roberts) about the practice of having visitor's visas automatically refused to applicants who have recently applied unsuccessfully for landed immigrant status. I asked the Minister to ensure that the practice be altered, and that instead a system be set up whereby each application would be assessed individually on its merits. I received a letter from the Minister who pointed out that there is no such policy. I am very well aware that there is no such policy but the practice exists. In his letter the Minister says that:

Neither the Commission which establishes policy in this area nor the Department of External Affairs, which is responsible for the issuance of visitor visas, has any policy or instructions to automatically refuse visitor visas to unsuccessful applicants for permanent resident status. If, in fact, such a practice currently exists at any office abroad, it has originated with local officials and is not sanctioned by me or Commission management.

The Minister goes on to say that he is not aware that any overseas post has enforced such a policy. He says:

If you have any information to the contrary, I would be pleased to receive it.