

*Supply*

process under way in New Brunswick. We will see processes undertaken in other provinces.

As we wait for Mr. Spicer, as we wait for the Beau-doin-Edwards Committee, as we see and hear what those groups have had to say, it is the time for us to take our direction and to see in which direction we want to go. That would be my concern. It is simply one of being a little premature.

**Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to take part in this important debate this afternoon. There is no subject more critical to Canada at this time than constitutional development.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois):** The hon. member for Hull—Aylmer on a point of order.

**Mr. Rocheleau:** It is about the quorum, Mr. Speaker. We are talking about Canada, about its future. Could we take a count of the members present, please?

[*English*]

**Mr. Nystrom:** Very briefly on the same point of order.

We are talking about an open constitutional process and I think the Bloc Quebecois and the Reform Party represent a certain point of view. I think they should be heard, even if only for a few minutes. What about the idea of dividing the remaining time between my friend from New Brunswick, who understands the necessity of all Canadians being heard, and one of our colleagues from the Bloc Quebecois. I think that would be fair.

**Mr. Allmand:** Mr. Speaker, as you know, we have only had two Liberals participate in this debate. I have been waiting here all day on the list. It looks like I will not get on. I have great sympathy with members of the Bloc Quebecois and the Reform Party in wanting to speak in the debate. I think you have to follow the order of precedence in recognizing parties and we all have to take our chances.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois):** I am ready to give my ruling. Since there is no unanimous consent, I will follow our Parliamentary tradition.

Up to now, we have had seven speakers, three on the government side and four on the opposition side. In all fairness, I have now to recognize an opposition member. I will therefore give the floor to the hon. member for Fredericton—York—Sunbury.

[*English*]

**Mr. Bird:** Mr. Speaker, I regret that there is not time for everybody to speak on this issue. I hope that there will be before the debate is over. We have a great many important days before us in Canada, and I am sure there will be ample opportunity for all of us to state our position.

I would like to quickly tell you this afternoon that as a New Brunswicker and as a Canadian, the kind of message I have thought seriously about giving to one of the many forums examining the constitutional future of Canada, the one that is now operating within my own province of New Brunswick. What I would say to them would not attempt to be a reasoned analysis of constitutional matters nor a political science treatise, but rather an effort to state one or two key values which I hold as much in my heart as in my head, about my province and about my country.

There are many ways, in my view, that New Brunswick seems a microcosm of Canada. That is particularly true in the composition of our citizenry, which uniquely portrays the balance among those of English-speaking and French-speaking heritage. Although our multicultural content is small in comparison to some areas, we have displayed a reasonable capability to accommodate and embrace a wide range of cultures with sensitivity and respect. Therefore, I feel that New Brunswick has a special opportunity, indeed an obligation to help set the tone for Canada and to be a model in several respects for what our country can become.

If there is any one expression to describe my feelings as a Canadian and a New Brunswicker, it is the sense of real freedom which is to be found here: Freedom to exist and to live in a vast country with lots of room for everyone. Freedom to grow, freedom to expand, freedom to develop in a society that is open, generous and tolerant; freedom to participate in a democracy that is just and accessible; freedom to dream and a potential which is overflowing with opportunity.