

*Government Orders*

When that happened, the people of Quebec started to listen to the siren songs and the abject lies of the separatists. They listened to them and actually believed that by voting yes, this group to my right were talking about making a better place for Quebec in Canada. What the people of Quebec did not know at that time was that the leader, the vice-premier of Quebec, was actually at that time circulating to four embassies saying that on October 31 you will recognize us as an independent state. The people of Quebec did not know that.

The leader of Her Majesty's official loyal opposition that the Liberals want in the position of Her Majesty's official loyal opposition decided that he would continue with those lies. He obviously got away with it to the extent that 38 per cent of the people who voted yes in the referendum actually believed those lies and that they were going to be a part of Canada.

What did the Prime Minister do? He absolutely panicked. He turned around and said: "Let's see, what do I have in my grab bag of tricks? What have we tried before? Why do we not take a whack at distinct society? Hey, that is a good idea. Let's do distinct society. What about veto? Yeah, crumb, let's do veto too. That's a good idea".

That is how we are in this House today with the government having rammed distinct society down Canadians' throats and tonight ramming veto down Canadians' throats.

Why did we get here? Some of the responses from my province are indicative of the kind of rage there is not only in British Columbia but around the nation. I will read a paragraph from a letter from Jack Weisgerber who is the leader of the third party in British Columbia. It is dated November 28 and addressed to the Prime Minister. He says:

If your aim is to truly keep Canada united from coast to coast, as I certainly hope it is—

I might parenthesize that there are some people in Canada who would question the Prime Minister's motives. Because I find that act reprehensible on the part of the Prime Minister and the Liberals, I will not do it. Then he says:

—you must have the courage to articulate a vision of Canada that is consistent with the views of most Canadians in every province. From British Columbia's perspective, the only vision of Canada that is acceptable is one where all provinces and all Canadians are equal, with special status for none. Surely that should have been the lesson learned from the referendum on the Charlottetown Accord, which is being entirely ignored by your government.

• (1615)

It is really telling the way in which this government has chosen to bring this legislation forward with a complete igno-

rance of the fact that the people of Canada rejected these provisions in the Charlottetown accord. Yet it is jamming it down their throats in spite of what the people have said.

The Reform Party is very clear and unequivocal. If there is to be any change to the Constitution, the Constitution must be approved by the people of Canada, not the provincial legislatures, not this assembly, but by the people of Canada because the Canadian Constitution belongs to Canadians.

We currently have an amending formula in our constitutional law. It is called the seven and fifty formula. That is the formula where seven provinces representing a total in excess of 50 per cent of the population of Canada would be able to ratify most changes to the Constitution. For the sake of time I will not go into the detail of the exceptions to that. That is a broad enough statement.

An interesting comment was written in the column "The write stuff" by constitutional experts David Bercuson and Barry Cooper. They say in part:

First, remember that we do have a Constitution in Canada; it contains an amending formula. Mr. Chrétien surely knows that. Given his pivotal role in its adoption back in the early 1980s, he must have once believed that the current amending formula is a good thing. But now, with Saint Lucien about to become the great helmsman of the separatist cause in Quebec, the Constitution is no longer convenient.

What then, can Chrétien do except to pretend the Constitution doesn't exist? Hence his proposal of wholesale change to the structure of government without following the rules. It is a plan that, if successful, will allow Chrétien to avoid the minor inconvenience suffered by Brian Mulroney of having his proposals for constitutional change thrown back in his face.

Chrétien's proposals are, in our view, more dishonest, more divisive, and far more repellent than anything the Mulroney gang ever dreamed up.

They go on to say:

There is no such thing as a "region" in the Constitution, or anyplace else in Canadian law. So, giving a constitutional veto to a "region" isn't much different than giving a veto to all red-headed, left-handed, green-eyed women in Canada. Both entities are equally recognized in the Constitution and both have the same status as constitutional players, namely none.

These experts, in looking at these things, are very incisive in their comments. They reveal the fact that the government and indeed the whole country of Canada are currently being run by a Prime Minister and his cabinet from scribbles on the backs of used envelopes.

In a column by Joan Bryden, entitled "Veto for B.C. fuels constitutional uproar" I read:

Although B.C. will now be recognized as a fifth region with its own veto—along with Ontario, Quebec, the prairies and the Atlantic region—Premier Mike Harcourt complained the move will make it even harder to amend the Constitution in the future.