

The Constitution

members of the New Democratic Party sell out to the government, sell out their friends in Atlantic Canada, sell out their commitment to the minorities of this country, sell out their commitments to the native people, and sell out their commitments to the rights of women in this country. That is what we have witnessed in this House in the past 24 hours, and that, in my opinion, is also a sad day for Canada.

● (1740)

Today I had occasion to direct a question to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chrétien), for whom I have a great respect both as a man and as a parliamentarian. My question was prompted by a concern arising out of the deal between the New Democratic Party and the government, because I could not quite believe what I was reading when I read the exchange of letters between the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent) and the Prime Minister. There was nothing in them to cover the Atlantic provinces and our argument for jurisdiction over offshore oil and gas.

I asked a question today of the Minister of Justice, who is the leader of the debate for the government and, if we can read between the rhetoric of the hon. gentleman, we get the message loud and clear that it was not even discussed, and while the exchange was taking place between myself and the hon. gentleman, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen), the senior member of this House from the Atlantic provinces and the senior member of the government, sat there laughing like a Cheshire cat, and well he should because he is the arch-Machiavelli of this House. In fact he should have, as a member representing the interests of the Atlantic provinces in the government, been hanging his head in shame over what this proposal does to the little province, the senior province, of Prince Edward Island.

So far as constitutional reform is concerned, this proposal literally legislates Prince Edward Island out of existence. Where was the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance when that hideous, objectionable provision was written into the proposal now before the House? And yet the New Democratic Party would support that measure, which would deny rights to one of the senior provinces of this confederation with respect to constitutional reform.

In so far as oil and gas and the rights of the province of Newfoundland, which we brought with us as a dominion into this confederation, are concerned, they are being denied not only by the measure brought before this House but also by the so-called sweetheart arrangement entered into a few days ago by the Leader of the New Democratic Party and the leader of the government in this House. In so doing the NDP sold its integrity in so far as the Atlantic provinces are concerned and sold out what few friends it has left in the Atlantic provinces.

I urge the House to support this motion. I urge my friend, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), the senior parliamentarian and dean of this House, who has not said one single word against the scandalous move of the

government to invoke closure on this important matter, to vote for our motion.

I urge the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville, who made such an eloquent speech against the measure to which he is now married by virtue of the action of his leader, to put his mouth where his heart is and get up and vote against this measure and vote for our motion.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McGrath: Finally, I urge the House to end the division and discord which are in the land as a result of the unilateral action the government proposes to take. I urge all hon. members of the House to vote for the realistic measure put forward by the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark), a measure which would allow for our constitution to be brought back to Canada, a measure which would allow for an amending formula to be built into the constitution and, more particularly, a measure which would allow us to retain our national pride and amend our constitution in Canada where it should be amended.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. It being 5.45 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the debate and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of proceedings now before the House, in accordance with Standing Order 58(9).

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): All those opposed will be please say nay.

Some hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Call in the members.

The House divided on the motion (Mr. Clark), which was negated on the following division: