

### *The Constitution*

We, in law enforcement, and indeed as citizens, are extremely concerned and solicit your co-operation and support in changing or amending the Charter.

Yours in matters of mutual interest.

Yours truly,  
J. G. Wales,  
1st Vice-President,  
Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police.

This matter of law enforcement is causing a lot of concern not only to the police forces throughout my area but, as stated in the letter, to the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police.

Anyone who reads the newspapers and reviews the lenient sentences imposed today by our courts on hardened criminals will know that this is not a time for Parliament and the courts to treat criminals as though they were a privileged class. I have stated many times in this House and in my riding that more tears are shed today for the criminals than are shed for the victims of crime.

This is a time for us to get tough on those members of our society who scoff at our laws, who prey on innocent, law-abiding citizens and who are presently getting the sympathy that should be reserved for their victims. I have always been a proponent of capital punishment and I am more convinced today than I have ever been that we must reinstate capital punishment for premeditated murder and for murder resulting from the commission of other types of crimes.

A few days ago a man was convicted in a local court for the murder of a Catholic priest. It was a heinous, callous, deliberate murder. The evidence was so conclusive that the murderer pleaded guilty. And yet, Mr. Speaker, this convicted murderer was allowed to bargain with the court and received a five-year prison sentence. Was that justice? No, of course not. It was a travesty of justice. I was sickened by it.

In my closing remarks I would like to say that I cannot support this attempt on the part of the government to replace the British North America Act with this Constitution before us today. This document does not contain the elements of an acceptable Constitution, and it contains too many items and provisions that are unacceptable to the majority of Canadians. This is evident from coast to coast. Canadians are wondering what is going to happen to the nation that they have enjoyed in the past, yet the government persists in going ahead with its Constitution—or the Prime Minister's Constitution, as I would have to call it.

On behalf of myself and my constituents in Victoria-Haliburton, I call upon the government to withdraw this resolution and act upon the Progressive Conservative Party's motion which calls for patriation of our Constitution and its amendment here in Canada.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marcel Ostiguy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, it is quite an honour and a privilege for me to address the House today in this historic debate. It is a responsibility and a duty for me as a Canadian and a Quebecer, and finally as the representative of the constituent of Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot to take part today in the building of our nation. Indeed, we have been discussing this

issue in the House for the past six months. I wish to point it out, Mr. Speaker, because in spite of the fine speeches we have heard in this House, the debate on the patriation of our Constitution has sometimes been diluted in an abundance of electoral and time-serving considerations or has been turned into a mere exercise of political marketing.

I refer, Mr. Speaker, to the Leader of the Official Opposition who has tried throughout this debate to use the patriation project to enhance his own image as party leader, while squandering the valuable time of the House at a cost \$300,000 per day out of public funds. I also refer to the eloquent silence of the Ontario premier who felt that the anglophone vote was more important than the rights of half a million of Franco-Ontarians. It is essential, however, to keep in mind that beyond all electoral considerations, beyond the provincial boundaries and jurisdictions, Canada's sovereignty and the basic rights of all Canadians are at stake in this proposed constitutional reform. It is within that perspective that the action of this government must be judged and it is within the same perspective that we must judge the people who downcry that action.

Of course the opposition against the proposed federal constitutional reform cannot be passed over in silence. But as *La Presse* editorialist Marcel Adam so rightly put it in an article published last February 28, and I quote:

It is not enough to awaken public opinion and have it endorse one's cause. One must also take constructive initiatives likely to defuse the crisis.

When the Right Hon. Leader of the Official Opposition crisscrosses Canada, warning people that our country is on the verge of breaking up, his statements certainly cannot be described as being "constructive initiatives". The official opposition dug in its heels unnecessarily to prolong this debate which has now been going on for 54 years, and yet that same party approves the position of the government, if we are to give any currency to this excerpt from the brief presented last January by the hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Epp) on behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party, and I quote:

We are tabling our proposed amendments to the government's proposed resolution, knowing full well that the majority of Canadians want the constitution brought back to Canada. Most of them also want that a charter of rights and freedoms of the people of Canada be enshrined in the constitution.

As I was saying, the official opposition dug in its heels to prolong the debate, in spite of that statement, so their attitude can hardly be called a constructive initiative. Finally, Mr. Speaker, when the Ontario premier categorically refuses to make Section 133 of the British North American Act applicable to his province, although recent polls published in the *Toronto Star* reveal that 52 per cent of Ontario residents would accept institutional bilingualism, here again we cannot say that his attitude is constructive. And yet, Mr. Speaker, our government did not relent in its efforts to break out of that constitutional deadlock.