

The Constitution

committee? Why is everyone not accepted who wants to speak? The answer is that 64 per cent of Canadians, at last count, were opposed to his actions, and more are jumping on the band wagon every minute.

This is not merely something to oppose as an opposition member of Parliament. It is the very soul of this nation for which we struggle. By the unilateral patriation of the Constitution, we are alienating Canadians and Britons alike. The whole process is dead wrong. The Right Hon. Prime Minister, with his majority can make his unilateral operation successful, but western Canada has indicated clearly that the patient may die. Confederation was the result of a consensus of the provinces, a partnership and a desired interdependence.

An hon. Member: Quebecers will remember you.

Mr. Stewart: It united bankrupt provinces, and to the surprise of the world was the basis of fewer than two million people building a railroad some 4,000 miles from sea to sea.

● (2100)

By this same British North America Act, our French Canadian brothers were able to retain their language and their culture, which they have to this moment. Had we not been cemented together by this act, I am sure we would not be a united nation today, but rather a conquered appendage of the United States. I can imagine how much bilingualism there would then be. This language right seems to be much on the Prime Minister's mind and that of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chrétien), but I would remind them that my premier says no to entrenching. Is it as Shakespeare would say, me thinks they protest too much. Is the real purpose of the charter of rights to entrench?

The British North America Act did not enshrine our differences, it protected them. This was done though Clause 7 of the Statute of Westminster, as pointed out by my colleague, the hon. member for Durham-Northumberland (Mr. Lawrence). Now the time has come to change that Constitution. I would like it clearly and unequivocally understood that not only do I champion bringing home our Constitution with its equalization rights, but so does my leader and, unanimously, our party. I want our Constitution home just as I wanted and strived for our own official national anthem. I withdrew my private member's bill, C-220, in favour of the government's Bill C-36, and I had the great honour of being the sole speaker on behalf of my party, by agreement of our House leaders, on making O Canada our official national anthem.

In 1867 the provinces gave up the right of individual powers to form a strong federation. They formed a partnership which still had strong individual powers yet equally strong central powers. It was a federation, a partnership and a good one. This must continue. We must not go down the slippery road to republicanism, as stated so eloquently by Premier Lyon of Manitoba.

We have heard a great ado made of human rights by the leader of the party opposite. I ask, is there any federal party in this House which has more claim to be proud in that field of

endeavour than the Progressive Conservative Party? I have in my hand a copy of the Canadian Bill of Rights introduced by the late Right Hon. John Diefenbaker in 1960. It is a code by which my party lives. Of course, this bill of rights is not in our Constitution, but to me it can be in or out as long as it is interpreted properly. The most perfectly written bill of rights is contained in the constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and one can just ask a citizen of Afghanistan how it is interpreted.

Again, unequivocally, I assert that I, my leader and my party are solidly behind the bill of rights for all Canadians, if that is what they want. But what is the rush? As one of the too often silent majority, I want to shout out for my rights for a change. As one of the approximately 70 per cent English-speaking people in this country, I want to talk about the saviour of "mon pays". How about my country, my Constitution? I am here to warn the Canadian people that this proposal is wrong and that I will fight this wrong. This whole process of constitutional change is wrong.

I am angry and I cannot take it any more. Fellow Canadians and, more importantly, Liberal backbenchers, do not take it any more. We are being wronged by this document. My constituents are being wronged. My country is being wronged; wronged by a deceitful document prepared by a Prime Minister who has worshipped at the throne of Machiavelli, Marx, Chairman Mao, Laskey and Castro and makes no bones about it. The only hope we have of change is a revolt of the Liberal backbenchers. From what I hear from over there, I don't think there is much hope.

The Prime Minister has the audacity to present this document to us, an effrontery to our country. He has the audacity to ask us to trust him in amending our Constitution; ours, not his Constitution. It has been said that Moses did not write the ten commandments, he just delivered them and led his people out of bondage. Well, the Prime Minister is leading us into bondage. We heard about his just society. What we have now is just a society.

In his book "Federalism and the French Canadian" the Prime Minister stated in reference to strong central government that:

It would certainly be an advantage if the federal government consulted the provinces about matters that affect them even if these matters are entirely within federal jurisdiction.

I do not see why we could not establish permanent consulting bodies to ensure that our trade, tariff, customs or monetary policies really reflect the opinions of people throughout the country and that no province feels undermined by the exercise of central power.

Why the change of heart? Why not then apply this to constitutional matters. Does this sound like a man who held up the first ministers' conference. Does this eschew trust? When I asked the Prime Minister about this statement, he said it was written ten or 15 years ago. Yet, in 1977 when asked if he wanted the book abridged, the answer was an unequivocal no. This is the same Prime Minister who recently, while in British Columbia, stated that if Canada did split apart because of his unilateral action on the Constitution, "Then I say it is not