

*The Constitution*

speech, and if anybody takes it that way, I am not referring to her at all.

● (2010)

In any event, even if it was not her maiden speech, I would not discuss this question attributing something to one member in particular. I could have referred to the Leader of the Opposition, and I did not. I am just suggesting that on these kinds of emotional issues hon. members might be expressing something which exists out there, but they on their own are going to have to decide in their regions if they are going to fight for Canada or not, because when I fight separatism in my province I do not come here and blackmail anybody and say, "You had better give me linguistic rights or my region might become separatist". That is not what I say. I fight them—

[*Translation*]

I oppose those people by saying that they are too narrow-minded. I say to them that we are Canadians and we are going to remain Canadians. That is what we say. Mr. Speaker, I have great respect for the feelings of the people who have spoken from all parts of the country on the constitutional question and not only on the resolution. Important things are going to happen in the coming months and in coming years. As the Parliament of Canada, we are going to have to decide if in future we are really going to have a federal government and whether it will have power or not. When westerners speak about the constitution, I think they are touching on a question which deals not only with the resolution before us but also with those constitutional questions, the questions of powers, which go much deeper.

But, Mr. Speaker, even there, in dealing with questions of energy, I have tried for a long time to understand what were the aspirations of the west. About the energy question for example, it will have to be decided that it is not only a matter of agreeing on price levels but also on which government will have the power. Some people, some political representatives from western Canada, especially at the provincial level, say, "Well, we cannot be sure that the federal government is going to be able to have a good energy development policy in the future." Mr. Speaker, we cannot agree as a political basis for this country, as a constitutional basis, to discuss the distribution of powers among the governments, to discuss the country's future on that basis. We cannot start saying because the federal government has more members from one region of the country than from another, that we will not be able to rely on the federal government to act in the interest of all Canadians. Here again, people are going to have to decide. I cannot debate these questions of powers in the context of energy, or in the area of the constitution, if people tell me, "Listen, you are doing things that will perhaps give rise to separatism in the west." If this gives rise to separatist sentiment, the sole salvation for the country will be if westerners combat this sentiment, as my party has combated separatism in Quebec, and as I combat separatism in my province. I have not asked

westerners, I have not asked people from Ontario or people from Quebec to come and combat the separatist element in my province. We are doing that ourselves.

Mr. Speaker, I wish the Progressive Conservative Party had decided to make this debate one which did not give rise to these divisions. It had the chance to do so. It could have made this a positive debate, without delaying three weeks on a simple resolution to refer something to committee. It could have made positive recommendations as, for example, on the question of a referendum, in the event of a lack of agreement between the provincial and federal levels, to consult the people directly in this area. What would they do when the situation was so inflexible that the federal government and the government of all the provinces could not agree on the amendment to the constitution? A means is being proposed. I must say that I myself do not necessarily like all these means, I do not say that all these procedures are those that I would necessarily prefer, but I am not alone in this House. The members of the Progressive Conservative Party are not alone either. If we want to solve the problems of this country by trying to have constitutional reform, it is going to be necessary to decide some time to patriate our constitution. Once we patriate it, we must agree on a process for changing it. But why is it that every time the Progressive Conservative Party—

[*English*]

**Mr. Blenkarn:** Why did you vote against it, then?

**Mr. Breau:** The hon. member should listen to me; then he would understand.

[*Translation*]

Whenever the Liberal party, or the Prime Minister, put forward a means of changing the constitution, the country is suddenly divided. However, I have heard many of their members speak about different views of Canada. But why? How is it that the hon. member for Mount Royal (Mr. Trudeau), the Prime Minister of this country, who has clearly explained this to Canadians and to Quebeckers on several occasions, because he represents those views. I can understand that the mentalities of all the people who know Canadian law or who discuss constitutional policy are not the same. We have different pasts, we have different kinds of education, we are not identical in Canada. It is they who preach diversity. But do those gentlemen in the Progressive Conservative Party realize that whenever they oppose the Prime Minister's proposals for constitutional change, they immediately say, "Ah! you are going to break up Canada?" Do they not appreciate the fact that what is happening is that they are maybe opposing a mentality or a way of wanting to change things in Canada— When we see people for instance who criticize the fact that the Prime Minister wants to codify things too much in the constitution?

But, Mr. Speaker, those questions in Canada, in discussions of constitutional law, are not monolithic. It is true that some