

The Constitution

[English]

However, in this context I want to say that the proposal which has just been made by the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada is not one that is acceptable to us. The suggestion that in all domains where there is constitutional change approved by the constitutional amending process which would enable a province to opt out and obtain financial compensation in so doing would indeed create, in terms of all kinds of social programs, a checkerboard Canada. That is a view which we would not put up with.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: It is one thing to recognize, as we ought to, the unique nature of the province of Quebec. It is one thing to recognize the unique qualities of Quebec—and I give credit to the government at last for doing this—in the cultural and educational domains require special consideration, but it is quite another thing for us to say that as a general principle for all provinces all new ideas like medicare, if proposed and accepted by constitutional amendment, could be rejected with compensation. Then the rich provinces could retain the money while the rest of the provinces would have medicare. I say to the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada that we would never have had medicare in Canada as a national program if that had been in effect at the time.

Mr. Clark: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would be the last to want to interrupt the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent)—

Mr. Deans: Why are you doing it, then?

Mr. Clark:—nor would I want him to commit himself to a position without perhaps fully understanding it. The example of medicare that he has just used would not be prohibited by the amendment we have brought forward. The Leader of the New Democratic Party, naturally, may make the decisions he wishes to make. However, I would hope that before he finally and absolutely commits his party, he might provide us with an opportunity to go through with him in detail what has been proposed so if there is an opportunity to extend an amendment that would bring in Quebec, he will judge that on the basis of proper information.

● (1510)

Mr. Broadbent: We can have a longer discussion on that point in future. I stand by what I said. The agreement that has been achieved would, by amending the Constitution, enable one province to opt out of that and obtain financial compensation. I listened to the Leader of the Opposition with great care and will read with even greater care what he has had to say. Certainly the preliminary reaction would be that social programs involving constitutional change could lead to the richer provinces opting out all along the line, leaving the poorer provinces to pay.

I will continue with the main points I want to make concerning the province of Quebec at this point in my comments.

[Translation]

English schools are no longer open to one and all in Quebec. The children of immigrants will have to attend French schools. As well, only Canadians who have attended English primary schools in Canada will be allowed to send their children to English schools in Quebec. Those amendments reflect greater respect for the distinctive character of Quebec. There is still room for improvement. For instance, arrangements ought to be made with respect to mobility should migratory movements appreciably alter Quebec's population balance. Quebec is already a distinct society in fact. I have in mind here the legal system and the Quebec Pension Plan in particular. That is good for Quebec and for Canada as a whole. Finally, Madam Speaker, francophones outside Quebec will gain recognition of their rights to education in all provinces of Canada. After 114 years, there is still progress to be made so that within a relatively short time francophones outside Quebec may be able to control their educational and social institutions just as anglophones do theirs in Quebec.

[English]

I want to note in this context that I am pleased to be able to send my daughter to a French language school which opened two years ago. For the first time we have a French language public school in the province of Ontario. There were Catholic schools teaching in the French language. Finally, the province of Ontario in the city of Ottawa is making French language available in the public system. Francophones all across our land must have that right.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: I want now to turn to two fundamental matters which must be of concern to all Canadians, namely equality of the sexes and the rights of Canada's aboriginal peoples. Before doing so, I want to say that when completed in a just form, I would like this resolution, particularly the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, to hang on the wall of every classroom in every school in every region of Canada. I do not say this because I believe in propaganda. I say it because I believe constitutions are fundamentally about rights, rights are fundamentally about people and people from childhood on must be encouraged to acquire a deep understanding of their own liberties as well as an even deeper appreciation of the liberties of others.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: Turning now to this document, I ask in all seriousness, would we want children anywhere in Canada to read a document which says, "Men and women are equal except when a group of politicians say they are not"? That is what is in this document. It is neither good for young boys nor for young girls.

In our culture at this time, this kind of symbolism can mean only one thing. It does not mean that males can be discriminated against as well as females. Everyone in this chamber and everyone in Canada knows that it means it is accept-