

could be arrived at for the establishment of a national capital region or district.

One wonders whether there would be a willingness on the part of the provinces of Quebec and Ontario to give up their territory. One could be unkind enough to say that if Quebec would give up Hull and part of the Gatineau hills, we could give Toronto to Quebec in exchange. One could also offer Ontario an Arctic island in exchange for the Ottawa area.

Mr. Rose: One with some oil on it.

Mr. Benjamin: Yes, it would be preferable if it had some oil on it.

I think this is a concept which is universally recognized, and the idea is supported in principle by people in all walks of life and in all political parties. Even if we did no more than just agree to this bill in principle and nothing else happened to it, that in itself would be a beginning. I am realistic enough to know that it would take a number of years to accomplish the objectives which the hon. member for Hull wishes to attain and which I think many members on all sides would like to see reached, but this would require discussion and agreement between the federal government and the two provinces directly concerned as well as resolutions of support from the other eight provinces and two territories.

This could become a district belonging to all the people of Canada, reflecting all the provinces and regions of the country and reflecting the two official languages and the multiculturalism of the people. In the way we would run the place, in the names of the buildings and streets and in the languages used recognition could be given to all parts of the country. In effect, it would be a place which would belong to all Canadians. People could still have their local government, they could elect their local education authorities and they would be governed by the laws of the respective provinces when it came to municipal and educational endeavours. These areas could be autonomous but, on the other hand, that would be subject to negotiation and agreement with Hull, Ottawa and the other municipalities in both areas as well as the provinces of Quebec and Ontario.

I congratulate the hon. member for starting this concept. He was lucky enough in the draw that his bill came up early and we had a chance for debate. I hope that subsequent to this debate the House will adopt the bill in principle. Even if it dies on the order paper, it will still be a beginning. I hope the hon. member will continue to expand on it and to seek the support of the national assembly in Quebec and the legislature in Ontario. He will then find much quicker results because of agreement being reached prior to any amendments to our constitution, to our federal legislation or to the legislation of the two provinces concerned.

I hope the government and all members will accept the bill in principle and that the hon. gentleman will continue to work at this worth-while endeavour.

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, in entering this debate it had been my intention to suggest to

you that Bill C-230, introduced by the hon. member for Hull (Mr. Isabelle), is defective in that it deals with a matter which is already before the House in another forum. However, I have consulted the Table officers, and I now find it to be acceptable. The constitutional amendments which are now before the committee in the form of a resolution do not make this particular bill, which also proposes amendment of the constitution, unacceptable under the procedures of this House. So on those grounds I have had to shift my stance.

There is, however, one matter which might be of some small concern to the hon. member introducing this bill. It is recognizable because the bill was introduced and given first reading on May 2, 1980. Clause 2 indicates that "this act may be cited as the British North America Act, 1980". I am sure the hon. member would like that changed to 1981, since we are now into the new year.

• (1750)

The explanatory notes refer to the remarks of Mr. Justice Cartwright of the Supreme Court of Canada in the case of *Munro v. the National Capital Commission* of 1966. I should point out that the Munro in question is a person with whom I am in no way connected. In part Mr. Justice Cartwright said:

—the change could doubtless, be made by an act of Parliament in which Her Majesty acts with the advice and consent of the Senate and the House of Commons of Canada.

Any resolution which would change our constitution must perforce go through the House either as a bill or, in very special circumstances, it could proceed as a constitutional amendment by order in council. But on a matter of this importance, it is quite correct that Parliament should make the decision.

As has been said by the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) and the hon. member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin), the matter of how the Senate and the House of Commons should give their advice and consent is at issue. It cannot be done in the House without the advice and consent of other levels or orders of government. I prefer to use the words "orders of government". As was said by the hon. member for Edmonton West, and I concur, the capital of my country is not by any means a matter which can be decided upon by one order of government. If I did not know the hon. member for Hull better, I would say he is demonstrating lack of awareness of the rest of the country by bringing forward a measure of this type without the approval of the other orders of government in this country and with a total lack of regard for the feeling of the hinterland or outlying parts of the country.

I am sure the hon. member does not wish to offend, but this is exactly what such an action would do; it presumes that this order of government could change the capital of the country without consultation with the other orders of government, even the one which is very close by and immediately affected, namely, the government of the province of Quebec. Without giving it too heavy an overtone, it is offensive in the sense that it would offend jurisdictions which are beyond the jurisdiction of this House, but which need to be consulted about any action