

The Address—Mr. Kaplan

[English]

I do not think one ought to say that Meech Lake is dead. I think that Meech Lake can succeed, and I think we want it to succeed. We want it to succeed—

[Translation]

I feel that it can succeed and that we can have a successful Constitutional state now if the parties—and those are the ones I mean are not interested anymore—if those two parties were ready to have amendments proposed and to consider suggestions to improve it.

[English]

A Québec Round is fine, but how can you validly have a Québec Round that does not take account of the interests of the rest of Canada, that does not deal with the issue about the northerners? How can you say that this constitutional opportunity should not be enlarged? I regret the suggestion that it is dead. I hope that is not what the NDP are saying in that part of the country. I hope that what they are saying is that we have an initiative here that can work. The purpose of my intervention was to call on the Government in Québec City and in Ottawa to do the things to make it work.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (Mr. Allmand) on a question or comment.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, we have just had some very strange statements by the Hon. Minister from Sherbrooke (Mr. Charest), and the Hon. Minister from Anjou (Mr. Corbeil). I would like my colleague, in particular, to comment on some of the implications of their statement.

To begin with, we have Ministers from a Party attacking our colleague here on this side coming from a Party whose Leader just the other day said the Constitution was not worth the paper it was written on. I am wondering whether the Hon. Minister who posed that rather aggressive question and the other Minister support that point of view. Do they support the point of view of their Leader that the Constitution is not worth the paper it is written on?

We also have these questions put by members of a Party where the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) says he is opposed to the notwithstanding clause, and he thinks it should not have been used against Bill 178 in Québec. We have in the same Cabinet, Ministers such as the Minister of the Environment (Mr. L. Bouchard) and the Minister of Transport (Mr. B. Bouchard), saying they support the use of the notwithstanding clause. I would be very interested in knowing where the Minister for Sports (Mr. Charest) stands on this issue, and where the new Minister from Anjou stands. Are they with the Minister for the Environment or are they with the Prime Minister?

We also have this strange phenomena where the Government of Québec says it is not bound by the Constitution of 1982, yet it uses the notwithstanding clause in the Constitution of 1982 to crush a judgment of the Supreme Court of Canada. How one cannot be bound by the Constitution of 1982 and yet use one of the principal clauses to crush a judgment of the Supreme Court is a rather interesting situation. On that point I would like to hear the comments of my hon. colleague.

• (1400)

Finally, with respect to the Meech Lake Accord, the Premier of Québec, Mr. Bourassa, after his election put forward five points for his signing the Constitution of 1982. Those five points did not touch upon at all the use of the notwithstanding clause. At that time he did not think that that was an important issue. He did not mention it at all.

The first Party to respond to the five points of Mr. Bourassa was the Liberal Party of Canada and the Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada. In our convention in 1986 we respected those five points. Unfortunately, when they came about to draw up the Meech Lake Accord they added a hang of a lot more than the five points originally put forward by Mr. Bourassa. It is those additional matters that we are trying to amend.

Mr. Kaplan: Mr. Speaker, I am reminded of Senator Lloyd Bentsen's observations about the presidential election when he talked about one of the candidates and said: "You are no Jack Kennedy". By watching the Prime Minister operate, and I say this in answer to my hon. friend, this is no statesman in the Prime Minister that we have been treated to in this alleged attempt to amend our Constitution.