

● (2310)

I sent a questionnaire out to the householders in my constituency. One question I asked was: Are you in favour of guaranteeing in the constitution the right of a minority group speaking either French or English to have their children educated in the language of the minority? Sixty-four per cent of the replies indicated they were not in favour of putting this into the constitution. The second question was: Do you consider it sufficient to trust each province to provide such facilities where the need exists? Seventy per cent said, "Yes, we are prepared to trust each province". Putting that in the constitution will be counterproductive. It will make people who believe today that the government is forcing French down their throats, say, "There, I told you; they are even asking for an amendment to the BNA Act".

Let me tell the House what the province of Alberta is already doing. It is providing full services for children of French parentage from Grade I to university, wherever the numbers require it. The provincial department and the school boards are co-operative, the private and separate school boards are co-operative. They provide education for Ukrainians and Germans.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired.

Mr. Maurice Harquail (Restigouche): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate this evening in this most important debate. We have all expressed our respect for this institution. When we think about this institution, we recognize that it involves the adversary system. But when one witnesses what was presented in the House tonight and all other remarks made by members of the official opposition respecting this important matter, one wonders about the adversary system.

With respect to the hon. member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor), the most charitable comment one could make is that he coloured the issue of the constitution very well, indeed. I say "coloured" and not "covered" because he did not address himself to the issue before the House tonight.

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harquail: I immediately agreed with the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) when he invited members of the House to speak about the issue at hand. He invited hon. members to speak about the constitution, not what we have witnessed here—innuendo, name-calling and misrepresentation of the worst kind. That is what we have seen in the House of Commons. There is one word for that type of demagoguery. It is despicable. That is the word for it.

We could get into the same type of response. If we want to pretend that this institution is supposed to work that way—that we do not discuss bills or the issue before us, that we attempt to mislead Canadians, we can do so, especially with

The Constitution

the advent of television. Hon. members opposite have not explained that this is not a bill, that it is only a motion, that we will refer it to committee and it will come back.

Some hon. Members: It is not a motion.

Mr. Harquail: It is a resolution. We are moving motions with respect to the resolution.

Mr. Epp: It is not a resolution.

Mr. Harquail: They do not tell Canadians—

An hon. Member: You do not know what it is.

Mr. Harquail: They do not tell Canadians through the media that there will be a continuing debate and freedom of expression in this House, which is what this very institution stands for.

Mr. Clark: When? How much?

Mr. Harquail: I have the privilege of doing that tonight. I am able to express myself without their interruptions. This is what the House of Commons is all about.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harquail: The right to be heard is the basic, fundamental principle of the House; members opposite should take some lessons—

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order—

Some hon. Members: Sit down!

Mr. Clark: —I wonder if the hon. member who is speaking would answer the following two questions for me.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark: How is the right to speak guarded by the imposition of closure?

Mr. Lalonde: That is not a point of order.

Mr. Clark: How many days of debate will be guaranteed in this House of Commons after a report from committee?

Mr. Harquail: Canadians gave the gentlemen who just spoke a great right when they gave him the title of "Right Honourable." I should think that he would want to think before he speaks and give some respect to that right.

Mr. Clark: Answer the question!

Mr. Harquail: I will answer you in the way you should be answered. When I have finished my time in which to speak, I will be happy to—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With all due respect, the hon. member should address his remarks to the Chair.

Mr. Clark: Please.