

*Supply*

particular issue. Therefore, if the Provinces of Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island or perhaps Manitoba are not satisfied about an issue which may have no relation to the creation of a province of Yukon or Provinces in the Northwest Territories, there may not be unanimous agreement.

While there are those who may say that this will not happen, I suggest that the history of our country has proven that it is quite possible that one or more provinces may say no.

The people of Yukon and the Northwest Territories want at least equal treatment as is the case for most constitutional changes. If they can make their case to the federal Government and seven provinces, with 50 per cent of the population of this land, then they should be able to form a province. That is the existing right that is being taken away by this Accord.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Ferland:** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member keeps trying to raise the point that it is impossible to obtain unanimity in Canada. The 1982 option recognized implicitly that it is impossible to obtain unanimity in Canada. The Meech Lake Accord has proved the opposite to be true. And I do not see how the Meech Lake Accord, with the undertakings it contains, how those negotiations, and the new political will we have seen emerge in Canada, which reflects the Canada of 1987, a Canada that has evolved since the time, five years ago when they said that unanimity was impossible— So we have to have 50 per cent of the people agreeing because of the assumption that it would be impossible to get unanimity—

How could there possibly be this fear it would be impossible? Can you imagine ten First Ministers refusing to let Yukon, already a territory, become a province? What do the Premiers have to lose by having a new province in this country? What do they have to lose as Premiers? Are they going to lose anything? Not at all! They will lose nothing. And the new provinces that will be created have everything to gain, in that they will not be accepted by a certain proportion but by all. That is the difference between 1982 and 1987. Not accepted by 50 per cent and rejected by 50 per cent. This time, they will be welcomed by the entire Canadian family, not by five but by all 10 children of the Canadian federation.

● (1630)

*[English]*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** The Hon. Member for Churchill for a short rebuttal.

**Mr. Murphy:** I think the important thing is to realize that there may be unanimous agreement right now with the 10 Premiers and the federal Government, but that does not mean it is going to be there forever and a day. What the people of the Northwest Territories are saying is to please make the constitutional amending formula flexible enough to recognize there may be some problems in the future. After all, my Province of Manitoba came in at a time when I suspect the

Province of Ontario may have said no to Louis Riel. Unfortunately for the people of Manitoba and fortunately for the people of the Red River Valley, Ontario did not have a veto.

What we are saying is that there may be reasons in the future which would result in one province, for whatever reason, saying no, even though nine other provinces said yes and even though the federal Government said yes. Absolutely no one will claim responsibility for being the father of the amending formula. No province will claim it insisted on this. The federal Government will not claim it is the father of this change. But obviously someone pushed for it. Someone in that closed room pushed for this particular amendment, and the people of the Yukon and the Northwest Territories want to know why, just as the native people want to know why they cannot have a guarantee of at least one more conference with all the First Ministers in attendance to discuss aboriginal rights.

**Mr. Dave Nickerson (Western Arctic):** Mr. Speaker, probably the worst thing about the debate today is that it is necessary. I wish we had not been called upon to debate this issue today. I wish that the 11 First Ministers who gathered in the Langevin Building some days ago had had the common decency to treat Canadians living north of 60 degrees as fellow men and women and not as some kind of creatures beyond the pale.

I am unable, Sir, to stand idly by when the interests of the people I represent are disregarded and when their heartfelt aspirations are cast aside. After having given the matter a great deal of reflection, I have come to the decision that I will support the motion before the House today. I have been here long enough to know that the introduction of such a motion was, in all probabilities, motivated by partisan considerations. I am sure that the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent) is not unmindful of the by-election which is coming up in the Yukon in a few days' time. I know that today's proceedings are part of the Business of Supply and, under normal circumstances, Members would be called upon to vote along Party lines. But I am going to treat today's motion at its face value, and it makes sense.

Perhaps it is time we did take cognizance of the suggestions made with respect to parliamentary procedural reform. Perhaps there is an occasion when a good idea can be brought forward by members of the opposition Parties.

There is no way that my vote is to be construed in any way as a vote of non-confidence in the Government. It is true that rapid advancements in constitutional development have taken place in the northern Territories under the Progressive Conservative Government. Far faster changes than ever took place previously when we were stalemated under the previous Government. I recall an example of that, and this goes back to the time the Hon. Member for Provencher (Mr. Epp) was Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. He gave letters of instruction to the Commissioner of the Yukon which were challenged in this House by the Hon. Member for Cochrane—Superior (Mr. Penner), who now presents himself