

S. O. 21

leader in the Yukon, Mr. Tony Penikett, and his counterpart in the Northwest Territories, Nick Sibbeston, were not at Meech Lake, they were not at the Langevin Block. They do not have the right to have their territorial Governments meet and pass or not pass the Meech Lake Accord. I believe the residents of Yukon and the Northwest Territories are in a very unique situation and I believe it is very important that, since they were not part of the Meech Lake Accord, they do have the opportunity to be heard in their own Territories.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): Madam Speaker, I am quite ready to accept the concept of having a joint committee of this House and the Senate consider the constitutional resolution as well as having a separate committee in the Senate itself. This was a concept that was worked out in 1978 when the constitutional proposals referred to as Bill C-60 were put before the House and Senate. I am not aware of any problem which came up at that time. I was not aware of any opposition to it by the NDP. I do not see the problems that my hon. friend sees.

Bear in mind that we are not formally considering the constitutional resolution at this time. We are considering in the context of a prestudy the contents of the constitutional resolution. A motion to adopt a resolution will then have to be formally put down on the Order Paper and that will have to be fully debated. It is in the course of considering the constitutional resolution itself that amendments will be considered.

I would think that my hon. friend should be willing to look upon the role of the Senate in this matter in the same positive spirit which led his Party to abandon its long-standing opposition not only to a role for the Senate but to the very existence of the Senate in any form and to support this motion. If the NDP is willing to support this motion, it is admitting that there can be a positive and constructive role for the Senate to play.

I see no reason why the Hon. Member should assume in advance that the Senate will not deal with this matter in a constructive fashion. I am sure he would reject any suggestion in the Senate that the House of Commons would not deal with this resolution in a constructive fashion. I do not think we should deal at this stage with that type of hypothetical question.

I would like to conclude by saying that I think we should be willing to examine the idea of the committee going to the Northwest Territories and Yukon. I for one would want to know first if those legislatures intend to have their own committee studies. This is something we can study. We are debating this today because the House Leaders of all three Parties, including the NDP, were willing to agree on behalf of their Parties to this form of motion. Having said that, I am still willing to consider this matter again.

● (1100)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): It being 11 o'clock a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 19(4) the House will now

proceed to Statements by Members pursuant to Standing Order 21.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 21

[English]

THE CONSTITUTION

1987 CONSTITUTIONAL ACCORD—INCLUSION OF MULTICULTURALISM

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, during Question Period yesterday I asked the Minister of Justice (Mr. Hnatyshyn) if his Department and the Government would be disposed to amending Clause 1 of the Constitutional Accord which would entrench, alongside the French-English linguistic duality, the multicultural dimension and reality as a fundamental character of Canada.

Not only did the Minister refuse to answer directly, but his response displayed an alarming disregard for and ignorance of this integral sector of Canadian society. Canadians who are neither English nor French in origin, despite the ineffective footnote of Clause 16, feel irrelevant in this Accord and believe that they have been ushered to the back of the constitutional bus.

To seek the inclusion of the multicultural character in Clause 1 is not an attempt to seek special rights, official status for a third language, or to deprive anyone or any group of any rights.

The amendment would simply ensure that Clause 1 would fully define and express the make-up of Canada and its people. Clause 1 overlooks 10 million Canadians who are neither English nor French in origin and relegates them to second-class citizenship. It is, therefore, an incomplete and inaccurate expression of Canada, and that needs to be amended.

How can the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and Premiers refuse to recognize the contribution and aspirations of one-third of its citizens? It is my hope that the Prime Minister and the ten Premiers will see fit to amend this clause accordingly. Otherwise it would be hypocritical for them to grandstand on multiculturalism before events and individuals of those persuasions.

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NORTHERN AFFAIRS

SUPPORT URGED FOR REINDEER HERDING TO ASSIST ECONOMY

Mr. Dave Nickerson (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, noting that the life of many people in northern Canada is based on government hand-outs, Mr. Arkady Cherkasov, a Soviet northern studies expert, has recently suggested reindeer herding as a suitable and economically viable alternative. This