

come close to mending that which is most glaring in this document.

It seems that the Government has decided not to allow any amendments and that what we are doing here is playing games in seeming to try to improve the Accord. The reason given for not accepting any amendments is that the Accord may come unravelled if it is opened up in any way. I cannot help but think, and many Canadians agree, that if such an important step in the development of our nation is based on a document that is so fragile that it cannot be opened up, because it cannot stand the light of day, maybe it should not survive. Maybe it needs more negotiation.

So let us be reasonable. Let us be courageous. Open up the agreement by passing one, both, or a combination, of these amendments. Then let us go forward with a constitutional amendment that is strong and secure, and which does not leave out some of the people of Canada who have as much right to be heard as any of us.

The Government has decided to close down the possibility of making changes to this document because of the fear that we will lose this Accord if we open it up for further negotiations. I fear that we may lose this Accord because we are afraid to open it up to improve it. We need more courage and more certainty that what we do in this Parliament is right for Canada. We can only help to build the kind of nation we all want if what we do in this Parliament regarding this Accord is good for Canada. I am sorry that we do not seem to have that kind of courage.

The least we can do is make a specific commitment for this House, this Parliament, this Government—today or before we pass the Accord—that the flaws be righted within two years at the first constitutional conference to be called with the territories and the native representatives there at that time. We also need to make sure that all Canadians have an opportunity to contribute to such a new constitutional development.

Only as we accept the idea that all Canadians are part of Canada and all Canadians should have a say in what Canada becomes can we accept the idea that this particular Accord, which does what it was supposed to do but which leaves out some people, should be followed very quickly by constitutional negotiations which will eliminate the kind of flaws that are in this Accord.

Mr. Berger: Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to the Hon. Member's speech. I could not help but be struck by the references that he made to the flaws in the Accord and the need to improve it, to change it, and to bring in the people who are being left out of the Accord. If he feels that way how can he support the Accord?

Surely, we are talking here about the fundamental law of the country. We are talking about the Constitution of Canada. If the Accord has so many problems with it, if people feel left

out of it, if it does not properly define what our country is all about, then surely our duty is to vote against it.

I would say, to quote what another Member said here yesterday, that he is whistling *Dixie* if he thinks we will get rid of the imperfections, that we will remove the flaws at some future point in time with this horrible rule of unanimity that we are putting into the Accord.

Mr. Hovdebo: Mr. Speaker, I did my best, to point out what I consider to be the flaws in this Accord. I also attempted to put before the House methods by which the flaws could be dealt with in the future. I suggest a commitment by the House to deal with those flaws within a certain length of time. I feel strongly that the time has come for us to recognize that the Constitution needs to be something that we can deal with in the House and in the provincial legislatures in a fashion which is always in the best interests of Canada.

I also have the same kind of doubts as does the Hon. Member that the Accord makes it a little more difficult to do what we would like to see done. I would like to see those amendments accepted now so that we can solve those problems much more quickly than having to go to another series of constitutional meetings.

As the Hon. Member for Western Arctic (Mr. Nickerson) indicated in his speech, I have faith. The Northwest Territories and the Yukon will some day become provinces in spite of the Accord. I also have faith that the aboriginal people will get their self-government, their rights recognized by the rest of Canada. I also feel the need to ensure that we are dealing with a country that has at least 10 provinces, and that maybe an eleventh and twelfth is important at this time.

• (1230)

[*Translation*]

Mr. David Berger (Laurier): As I said earlier this morning, Mr. Speaker, I have listened with great interest to the speeches made during the past few days, and I noticed the large number of Members who supported the Accord and referred to the new openness being seen in this country. However, every time we ask them why the governments refused to undertake both to protect and promote language minorities, the answer is that we should remember there are some pockets of resistance in the country and that governments cannot move faster than their constituents. In fact, this should be a reason for us to take a closer look at the Accord and think about the so-called openness on which it is based. You have known for some time now that I object to the Accord. I shall vote against the Accord, Mr. Speaker, because I believe it does not serve the interests of this country or of Quebec, my own province. I shall vote against the Accord because I do not believe it serves the interests of my constituents in the riding of Laurier. I shall vote against the Accord as a Canadian whose origins are not Anglophone, or French. The values I acquired as a result of my origins include the passionate defence of individual rights, and especially equality rights for all Canadians across Canada.