

announced that he was to incorporate aboriginal rights in the constitutional resolution. Everyone was going around patting himself on the back claiming the amendment proposed was his idea, trying to take credit for it. I would remind you, Sir, that it was the Liberal Party which introduced that amendment.

At the time the hon. member for Nunatsiak (Mr. Ittinuar) said he had to thank the Prime Minister of Canada for agreeing to include that in the Constitution. I must acknowledge the native wisdom of our Indian friend, the hon. member for Nunatsiak, who so rightfully asserted, while everyone was proposing we should celebrate, that he would not celebrate until the Constitution was officially brought back here to Canada. His attitude was vindicated the very next morning by the events that followed.

The chief spokesman for the Official Opposition explained that now that the committee has approved the first three chapters of the resolution, now that we have all agreed that Canada has to have its own Constitution, that the Constitution should be patriated, it goes without saying that the Constitution must have an amending formula because it cannot be brought back without such an amending formula otherwise we will have to go back to Britain for amendment. He said they agreed with the charter of rights; he had just finished agreeing on aboriginal rights, but then he said it was time to split the resolution, time to call a halt to the whole process and refer the matter back to the premiers of the provinces for their consideration. This was just another stalling tactic of the opposition, a technique to invoke opting out, an opportunity to resort to some kind of a veto which would rescind everything we have done and postpone indefinitely patriation of the Constitution and a charter of rights for which the people of Canada are waiting.

Let me review the amendments introduced by the hon. Minister of Justice. You must be well aware that it was a Liberal amendment which placed a reference to God in the 1960 Diefenbaker bill of rights.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (2130)

Mr. Bockstael: When Canada adopted its national anthem last July, we ensured that the official text included the line "God keep our land glorious and free".

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Parliament did that.

Mr. Bockstael: In our earliest negotiations with the provinces we proposed a preamble which recognized the authority of God, but regrettably some premiers would not accept such a preamble to our Constitution. For my part, let me confirm how pleased I am that the resolution in its final form on which we are about to vote acknowledges the supremacy of God and the rule of law.

At the special joint committee hearings, we were delighted to see adopted the so-called Henderson amendment for the

The Constitution

Atlantic provinces. It stipulated that the approval of two Atlantic provinces, regardless of their size or the number of their citizens, would be sufficient to authorize amendments to the Constitution. To even things up with the Atlantic provinces, a second Liberal amendment will do the same thing for the western provinces. With this new amendment any two western provinces, regardless of their population, will have the power to approve amendments to the Constitution.

Last August in Dauphin, Manitoba, Premier Lyon said that any amending formula should protect all provinces not having as large a population as Ontario, Quebec or British Columbia. I am sure tonight this amendment will please Manitobans and will be welcome news to all western Canadians, for what it means in effect is that there are no more second-class provinces under the Constitution of Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Can't you count?

Mr. Bockstael: The third set of amendments we are to consider is the catch-all omnibus amendment proposed by the Progressive Conservatives. While it may appear to them to have merit, we have to note that it only establishes a situation in which "you can't have one without the other".

Personally, I was disappointed that the right to life of the unborn was not entrenched in the Constitution, but I must point out that the proposed opposition clause which states "Nothing in this charter affects the authority of Parliament to legislate in respect of abortion and capital punishment" is absolutely superfluous, for it changes absolutely nothing.

We have been assured by the Minister of Justice that through the Constitution the government retains implicitly the right to formulate laws under the Criminal Code to regulate abortions and such related legal matters.

Turning to more positive aspects of the charter, our Canadian charter will seek to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians.

Mr. Fleming: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bockstael: I am ever grateful and I thank God for the privilege of having been born in Canada and of enjoying equality with all my fellow Canadians. In addition, I enjoy an ethnic background which broadens my horizons. I truthfully feel I am as anglophone as the majority of hon. members opposite, I am as francophone as every member on this side of the House, but first and foremost I am a Canadian.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bockstael: I respect and uphold the bilingual and bicultural reality of this country. I am a fully integrated Canadian.