

varied from province to province. This has been part of our history and tradition. Are we the worse for it? No, there is a diversity in our make-up which has permitted provinces to move in accordance with their separate wants and priorities, each within its time and circumstances. It has allowed the people in our regions to grow and enjoy as they would choose, not as they would be required or forced to do.

While the term "opting out" is perhaps not a very apt one, what is meant by it? In what areas might they opt out? Put simply, those areas subject to the opting-out provision would be those touching upon the rights and privileges already granted to the provinces under the BNA Act, under which they have been operating for the last century or more. It is taking away something they already have.

How much different is that from the Victoria formula, which encourages such comments as the one reported at page 7445 of *Hansard*:

But one essential fact remains for us members from Quebec, namely that the government of Quebec and all Quebecers maintain their right of veto and that in future no constitutional change can be made without their consent. I consider that this right of veto is a prerequisite condition for anyone who acknowledges the specificity of Quebec.

Those same words could be used for Ontario or for a combination of any two Atlantic provinces. It throws a population veto out of balance when one considers that the population of British Columbia exceeds that of all the Atlantic provinces together. If the Vancouver formula is bad, the Victoria formula is worse. It makes classes of provinces, gives some a perpetual veto and perpetuates seeds of ongoing discord. Is this the equity, fairness and justice that Canada wants written into its Constitution? No, Mr. Speaker.

The future of Canada will remain secure only if we allow Canadians in various parts of our country to have their regional identities, to maintain their traditions and to live up to their own values within Canada. If we want to strengthen and maintain Canada, the government should follow such a course.

The people of St. Catharines and indeed the people of Ontario are not seeking any special status or privilege, even knowing the province of Ontario has the right of veto in the government's resolution. Public opinion polls taken within the province show that they, too, want to bring the Constitution home and then to participate, in a capacity equal to all other Canadians, in the drafting of a Constitution made in Canada by Canadians for Canadians. They are prepared to participate as equals. Our fear is—and I fervently hope that such will not be so—that that opportunity may be lost forever unless we change the present animosity, alienation, confrontation and indifference to the alternative course of action of appreciation, harmony and understanding. Only then will each of us as Canadians from our various regions be able to share in the joy and pride which go with the symbols and institutions with which we identify as Canadians. Unless there is a feeling of pride and participation, the risks and divisions contained within the proposed Constitution will live for many years to come.

The Constitution

It has been said often that unity does not mean uniformity. It has never meant uniformity. Nor does uniformity give unity. One can find unity in the diversity of the country, for it has been the Canadian way of life and has made Canada the envy of the world. The major purpose and duty of the government is to remove regional unfairness and disparity and to promote equality across the land, just as it adopted the provision of equalization and wrote it into the Constitution. This has been accepted by all.

I should like to turn to the showpiece of the government's constitutional initiative—the Canadian charter of rights and freedoms. It is the showpiece because it is the part of the package to which most people can relate. The hon. member for Parkdale-High Park and other speakers on the government side indicated that the charter may not be perfect. Then they went on to say, "but nobody has to be perfect." This is merely a continuation of the wrong premise from which this package stems. If we are to have a charter at all, as Members of Parliament do we not have a responsibility to draft the very best one possible, especially if we are building, as the hon. minister pointed out in introducing the motion, a better Canada? In fact, he said:

We have the occasion, after the traumatic experience of the spring, to build for our children and the children of our children a better Canada.

Does this not mean that we must develop and draft the most perfect Constitution possible?

Property rights are sadly missing from the government's package. Since coming to this House I have heard members speaking rhetorically about looking upon the Rockies, gazing over the Pacific coast, the coves of the Atlantic provinces or the wheat fields of the west. They have said, "These are my Rockies, my beautiful landscapes, my forests and my grain fields, mine for me to enjoy because I am Canadian and they are Canadian." That is like saying: "They are mine to enjoy, that is right, but please do not touch; they are beautiful, but they are beyond your reach." How can you say, Mr. Speaker, that they are yours when you cannot even own a little piece of them, or just a corner of them?

● (1620)

For a brief moment it seemed that common sense would prevail and that the government would support our position on property rights. But then, common sense and another good Canadian tradition was displaced by political expediency. The family home, the family farm and the family business are basic to our Canadian way of life. New Canadians have come here with that single motivating thought. Indeed, I say to the hon. member for Parkdale-High Park that in Poland the people are struggling to gain the right to own and occupy a single piece of land.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Reid (St. Catharines): The right of ownership is one which is to be denied in this Constitution—or perhaps not confirmed is a better way of putting it. We have heard it mentioned, and I think it was almost spoken with praise, when