

Government Orders

[Translation]

Then you go to the other side, to Cap-Pelé, Shediac, Buctouche and you see these French speaking people, these Acadians, who were deported and came back, but who kept the French language and culture in absolutely incredible conditions. They are proud of their Frenchness, they are proud of speaking French and very proud of being New Brunswickers; nothing will stop them from remaining French speaking. They are very proud to be Canadian.

If that spirit prevailed in the country from coast to coast, I think it would be the best example that Canada could give to the whole world. When we see the problems in the world today, where people kill one another because of cultural or language differences and you go to New Brunswick or to my riding, the smallest English speaking communities have their school commission, the French speaking community has its school commissions and they live and work together for the economic progress of that community; this is Canada at its best.

Today, as I speak in this House as the member for Beauséjour, I am pleased to support this motion, because in the history of New Brunswick and especially of the French community in New Brunswick, they have taken their destiny in hand, with this unfailing perseverance and determination.

The minister talked about Senator Robichaud, who decided to shake New Brunswick's cage, so to speak, by proposing to make the two language communities equal. Later Richard Hatfield took up the torch and today Premier Frank McKenna is continuing to advance the cause.

[English]

For me it is a great day. It is an example that we can be together and at the same time be different in Canada. I have my colleagues with me. The member for Moncton and the other members live that by the day. They are all elected, every one of them, by francophones and anglophones. They manage to keep them happy.

That is the way I would like this country to work. It is not the Charlottetown accord or anything else. This is a commitment of these two communities that was done a long time ago. When we amended the Constitution in 1982, we made provisions so that some amendments could be made to the Constitution in a bilateral way between the provincial and the federal governments.

That is exactly why it is there. There are some elements in the Constitution that affect only one province. It will not be unique to New Brunswick. For example, in Newfoundland they have the duality of the school system based on religion. This does not exist in other provinces. The same thing exists in Quebec. It is not the case in Ontario and other provinces. We need to have that flexibility in the Constitution. It is being used for a very noble purpose today.

• (1030)

In conclusion, I would like to say that it is a great example of understanding, generosity, tolerance and diversity.

[Translation]

Since I will unfortunately not be a candidate in the riding of Beauséjour at the next election, I am happy to take the opportunity given me today to support the government's proposal and ensure that the Canadian Constitution will fully protect New Brunswick's French speaking community. This is a great day. I am pleased to support this motion and I take the opportunity to thank the people of Beauséjour who have been so generous to me and my wife these last two years during which I represented them.

[English]

All these places, Cape Tormentine, Sackville, Dorchester, Memramcook up to Richibucto, are the best of Canada.

Therefore, it is with great pleasure that I support this motion.

I move, seconded by the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst:

That the question be now put.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Madam Speaker, I too wish to say a few words on behalf of my party in support of the motion before the House today to amend the Constitution of Canada.

It is really a very rare day indeed in this country when we actually amend the Constitution of Canada. We have spent many hours and many years talking about constitutional reform, but today we are actually amending the Constitution and making this country a better place not just for the people in New Brunswick, but a better place for all of us regardless of where we live.