

his sister in Nova Scotia. The fundamental question is whether we can long survive as a nation if there are no fundamental attributes of citizenship that apply regardless of which province one happens to live in. The view that fundamental human freedoms, the basic attributes of Canadian citizenship or what it means to be a Canadian, should be subject to sterilization by any province has on more than one occasion been rejected by the Supreme Court. It should also be rejected by Parliament.

In making explicit and then guaranteeing rights which have become fundamental to our view of what it means to be a Canadian, we cannot then go on to make those rights depend upon the geographical roulette of where in Canada you happen to live. Federalism is not simply the stringing together of a number of sovereign states or a mere community of communities. In the words of the British North America Act of 1867, we created a federal union, strengthened by the growth of new provinces and by the historic decision of Newfoundland in 1949 to join with the country. We did not create an agency of provinces in 1867; Canada is more than the sum of its parts.

I began my remarks with a reference to the famous three questions of Hillel. The last question was: "And if not now, when?" It is now clear that the tensions within federalism are far more than dual and far more than simply cultural or linguistic. That is why the debate on the Constitution is not irrelevant or the private fantasies of one man. The challenge of constitutional, economic and political reform will be with us long after the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) disappears from the scene.

Many years ago a Canadian who has contributed much to the political, cultural and intellectual life of our country, Frank Scott, said that one day Canada will have a rendezvous with the BNA Act. Canada's rendezvous with the BNA Act is imminent, and I am proud that my party and, if I may say so, my leader have not flinched at the prospect of this rendezvous but rather have welcomed it.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Mr. Henri Tousignant (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I do not intend today to give a historical account of federalism in Canada. This has been done many times already—

[English]

Some hon. Members: What is going on?

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Have we lost our right to free speech? Do we on this side of the House never get a chance to speak? What are you trying to do, knock us out or something?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. No members have been prevented from speaking in the House; it depends upon when they are recognized. The Chair has always followed the tradition of recognizing the parties evenly.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

The Constitution

Mr. Taylor: We have already heard two Liberals.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): For the information of the hon. member, I could go through the list of speakers who have participated so far. It is traditional that the Chair goes from government to opposition. This has been a long-standing tradition, and I have followed it quite fairly.

Let me start with the last round. The last NDP member who spoke yesterday afternoon was the hon. member for Brant (Mr. Blackburn). Then we had one Liberal, one P.C.; one Liberal, one P.C.; one Liberal, one P.C.; one Liberal, and the eighth speaker today was a member of the NDP, the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood (Mr. Rae). Now we go back to a Liberal and then a P.C.

Mr. Epp: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am not in the habit of questioning what the Chair has said, but when I approached the Chair earlier today, Your Honour will recall that I reiterated a conversation which had taken place yesterday with a member of the chair. The arrangement yesterday was that there would be four speakers for the government side, three speakers for our party and one for the NDP.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

● (1610)

Mr. Epp: Just let me finish. You will recall that at the same time the hon. member for Brant (Mr. Blackburn) came to the Chair. Through the gentlemanly arrangements which take place in this House, we agreed that he would be recognized earlier in that first cycle of eight because of his own time schedule. That was the arrangement which was left with your predecessor yesterday, Mr. Speaker. It was agreed to by all parties.

Today when you recognized the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood (Mr. Rae), I came up to the Chair and pointed the matter out again. In order to try and rectify the situation you said subsequently that you would be recognizing the hon. member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Beatty).

We are now in a difficult situation. On the one hand you say that you will be recognizing a member of the government party, and on the other a member from the opposition. That is fair and I have no objection to it, but I say to you, Mr. Speaker, with all the respect I can muster, that a mistake was made in terms of the arrangements which were agreed to yesterday.

Mr. Collenette: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I do not think that we should prolong this matter. If it is to be a point of absolute determination on the part of the opposition, I am sure we can reach some accommodation. But I would like to set the record straight.

Yesterday afternoon I informed the Deputy Speaker that during the three days of debate the government would be exercising its normal right on a government motion, which is to put up a speaker for each speaker from the opposition. As