

change, you needed unanimous agreement to change anything to do with the distribution of powers. Other things could have been changed by a two-thirds of provinces with 50 per cent of population. In any case, the Fulton-Favreau formula was never accepted.

With respect to the establishment of this committee, yes, this party is willing to support the establishment of a committee to examine how we can better amend the Constitution, but we think that that cannot be the only matter to be considered by that special joint committee.

It is impossible to sit down and discuss how to change our Constitution without at the same time considering other important constitutional matters, including the division of powers and the Senate. I would say as well the place of aboriginal peoples in this country. It is a shame. It is a bit of a scandal that that has gone on so long and not being able to agree to the true place of our aboriginal peoples in this country.

In the Constitution agreement of 1982, it was provided that there would be three First Ministers' Conferences on aboriginal self government. Those three conferences were held. Not much headway was made. A fourth such conference was held after the Conservatives came to power in 1984.

Another matter that I would suggest has to be dealt with at one time or another is our basic language rights. While the Constitution agreement of 1982 has some good provisions with respect to language rights in it, there is a need for more change to provide greater equality, greater equity for English and French speaking minorities across this country.

In particular, I would hope that some day section 59 of the Constitution agreement of 1982 would be abrogated because section 59 puts certain restrictions on the use of English in the Province of Quebec, restrictions which are not imposed on French language minorities in other parts of the country. I must say, Mr. Speaker, I voted against that provision in 1982.

In considering proposals for constitutional change before this committee, I do not think the committee should be too uptight or too reticent to consider measures that are sometimes referred to as distinct for Quebec or special for Quebec.

I voted for the Meech Lake Accord. I had accepted it, even though I would have preferred that it be amended. It did not bother me that we had a provision in our

Government Orders

Constitution that Quebec was distinct, because it has been in effect distinct for a long time. It is the only province with the civil law.

Arrangements have been made over the years for it to have its own pension plan different than the Canada Pension Plan. There were special arrangements for immigration, student loans, tax collection and so on. These have not hurt the Confederation. This could not be done on a wide scale basis, but to take into account very special needs of Quebec language and culture and other matters that are close to Quebec's heart, I think that we have to consider these and put them in the Constitution in one way or another so that it is fair for all provinces.

As I say, it will not be something new. It was done since 1867. If you want to be serious about this, it was done from the time of the Quebec Act in 1774.

There are, of course, other studies going on at the present time with respect to constitutional change, and that is why at the very beginning of my remarks I accused the Prime Minister of a bit of *ad hockery*, of desperation in setting up yet again another forum for constitutional change.

A few weeks ago he set up the Spicer commission, or the people's forum to listen to Canadians with respect to the future of this country on constitutional change. Already two members of that special commission have resigned, and two new ones have been appointed.

All this demonstrates that the Prime Minister did not give much attention to this in the first place. These things were set up quickly. The terms of reference were set up quickly. Not enough instruction was given to the chairman, and not enough information was given to members of the commission before they accepted to sit with this very special commission.

This commission is already under way. We have the Bélanger-Campeau commission which is sitting in Quebec. The provinces of Alberta, New Brunswick and Manitoba have also set up commissions with respect to constitutional change, and so has the Assembly of First Nations.

Next Monday, the leader of this Party, Mr. Chrétien, will appear before the Bélanger-Campeau commission to put before them a comprehensive approach to constitutional reform for Canadian unity and for federalism.