

Constitution gives much more jurisdictional power to their central government. If we are to follow a US model respecting the Senate, should we also follow a US model respecting the distribution of powers? Does the "Triple E" proposal contemplate taking powers away from Don Getty and the other Premiers? Let's take an issue of particular interest to Alberta - jurisdiction over natural resources. In the US, all resources except fish are under federal jurisdiction - the exact opposite of the case in Canada. Do advocates of a "Triple E" Senate want to take resource jurisdiction away from the provinces? I would be very surprised.

Those are the kinds of questions that have to be considered very carefully as we proceed with Senate reform. Because you can't change one institution in isolation from the rest. We learned that concerning the Charter of Rights, and the respective powers of elected governments and the courts.

Institutions have to change, as society does. But we have to be sure we know what we are doing.

The Prime Minister made that point, clearly and carefully, during the election campaign, when he warned against improvised solutions regarding Quebec. His warning and his wisdom apply equally to other changes in our Constitution, including reform of the Senate. We want changes that make Canada work better. That requires both commitment and care. That is the spirit in which this Government is approaching the meeting of April 30th, to deal with what the Premiers call the "top constitutional priority", and that is the spirit in which we approach the undeniable need for Senate reform.