

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Herb Breau (Gloucester):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak this evening for a few minutes about this important question of the resolution before us, a resolution whose aim is to refer to a joint committee of the House of Commons and the Senate an aspect of the constitutional question, namely, patriation of the constitution, an amending formula, the entrenchment of fundamental rights, certain rights concerning education and some minority language rights.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I must say that it is regrettable that the Progressive Conservative Party decided from the very first evening when this debate was launched, to make it a "divisive" debate. They complain that it is a "divisive" debate, a debate which gives rise to strange emotions in the country, but we can wonder why they adopted such an attitude if they were so frightened of having a "divisive" debate. And today we are faced with a situation where the government, after almost three weeks of debate I think—perhaps it is not exactly three weeks, but if it isn't, it is only a matter of one or two days—decided simply to refer this resolution to a committee.

I can understand that the Progressive Conservative Party does not like some parts of the resolution. I can understand that, on the basic question, there are some things with which they disagree. This is clearly their right, and if feelings exist in the country that are really opposed to certain basic elements of this resolution, it is their duty to say so, but I wonder why they should try to hide opposition to these questions, which are so important to the country, behind a criticism of the procedure that the government is following, without making any proposal concerning what other kind of procedure they would like to follow. I have heard everything and I have listened to the debates, I have not read all of them in detail but I have read many of them, and I have heard many. I wonder therefore why the Progressive Conservative Party could not come to the committee and put forward another procedure, instead of simply telling us that a resolution like this will give rise to strong feeling in the country, which could be a divisive debate. Unless of course they want to make sure that we will never have what the resolution proposes. After all, it is important to patriate the constitution. The Progressive Conservatives tell us that they would be willing to patriate it, and after that to have an amending formula which some provinces agree would be the Vancouver amending formula.

But not everybody in Canada agrees on this amending formula. Who is to say that this fine amendment is the absolute truth? It simply appeals to certain premiers who would like to have the right of veto on certain questions in an amending formula. Why should the solution suddenly have to be the one these few premiers propose? And what would we do then about the question of the entrenchment of rights?

Mr. Speaker, it is said that this resolution can break up Canada. The previous speaker said it exactly, namely, that this motion of closure should be withdrawn because it could break

*The Constitution*

up Canada. We are told about threats of western separatism. Mr. Speaker, in this situation we have to decide. As a Canadian, and as a member of Parliament, I cannot debate a question with Canadian members of Parliament—not provincial members but federal members—who tell me: "Be careful what you propose, be careful how you vote, be careful what you do, because the people I represent will perhaps want to separate." I cannot accept this blackmail, Mr. Speaker.

I have never accepted it. Where I come from, among Acadians, we have people who are a kind of separatist, they want an Acadian province. I have never come to the House to tell Anglophones, when dealing with linguistic or cultural issues, "Give us what we ask for because we are afraid of the separatists!" On the contrary, I have decided to opt for an attitude of political moderation, and I do not come here to tell people, "You had better give us what we want because we are going to separate." Therefore, I say to my colleagues from the west, whatever their party, that there may well be feelings of separatism in the west. But the people of the west will then have to decide; either they want to belong to Canada or they don't. But they had better not come and blackmail me like this—

[*English*]

**Mr. Blenkarn:** You will probably fight against the country too and you will throw them out.

**Mr. Breau:** I do not know what the hon. member is referring to. I am saying that I cannot debate any question, including the constitution, if a federal MP is going to tell me that I had better be careful what I propose and had better accept what he wants because, if not, his region may separate. Those MPs may be expressing something that is correct, but they have to make up their minds whether they are going to fight for the country in their region or not.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Breau:** When I fight a Canadian separatist in my province—

**Mr. Clark:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows there are certain courtesies in the House. One of those has to do with a member who has just made his or her maiden speech. At the best of times a member of Parliament should not misrepresent the positions put forward by another. That is particularly so in the case of a first speech, as was the case with the hon. member for Vancouver Centre (Miss Carney), who said nothing of the kind that is being attributed to her by the hon. member now speaking.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Breau:** Mr. Speaker, I am not referring at all to the hon. member who just spoke. I am referring to a sentiment which even the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) expressed in his speech a few hours ago. I am not referring to that hon. member at all. I did not know that it was her maiden