

*Supply*

was in convention last November we passed a resolution to completely withdraw Article 42(1)(f) of the 1982 Constitution. That is the provision which requires agreement of seven provinces plus 50 per cent of the population. It was the feeling at the convention that we should return to the traditional way of doing things whereby it would be a matter between the federal Government and the new province concerned.

Another issue is that in drafting the Meech Lake Accord the Premiers and the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) completely overlooked the appointment of more Senators for those two Territories. They provided that each province provide a list of names for appointment to the Senate and forgot that we have a Senator from Yukon and a Senator from the Northwest Territories. If in due course we have a third territory we will probably have three Senators. That is with respect to that part of the resolution relating to the Northwest Territories and Yukon.

With respect to other parts of the resolution, which deal with aboriginal rights and the aboriginal right of self-government, once again I believe we can provide in this Accord further constitutional conferences on aboriginal self-government without impinging at all on Quebec's proposal. There was nothing in the Quebec conditions which dealt with aboriginal rights, and as far as I can see you can completely agree to the distinctiveness of Quebec's society and the promotion of that distinctiveness without being prevented from recognizing aboriginal rights and aboriginal self-government in the Constitution.

It is interesting to note that there was some movement between the Meech Lake Accord and the Langevin resolution. The Accord did not refer at all to the question of aboriginal rights or the rights of the multicultural heritage in Canada. However, in the resolution they at least put forward in Section 16 a non-derogation clause whereby the new Section 2 of the Constitution would not derogate from those rights entrenched in the Constitution with respect to the aboriginal people and multicultural heritage. That indicates that there was some goodwill there. Yet we know they did much of that in the middle of the night, after a long, long meeting, and probably it was not completely thought through.

In Section 37 of the Constitutional Act of 1982 they provided for further First Ministers' Conferences to discuss and take action on aboriginal rights, and in particular aboriginal self-government. Four conferences were held as required, one each in 1983, 1984, 1985 and this year, 1987. Alas, no agreement was concluded. The aboriginal peoples of Canada are saying to us that we went through four First Ministers' Conferences on aboriginal self-government and we could not agree. That shows we did not have the same political will at those conferences that we had when we sat down to discuss the Meech Lake proposals where we agreed unanimously to the

conditions put forward by Quebec. We have now moved forward quickly on the resolution. They are saying if we can demonstrate that political will with respect to one group of people in Canada, surely we can do it with respect to another which was here for thousands of years before the Europeans came.

It is also interesting to look back on those four conferences. The objection of several provinces was that they could not agree to entrenching aboriginal self-government in the Constitution because they did not know what it means. They said "It must be more precise." They want to make sure they know what they are agreeing to. Isn't it interesting that in the Accord all the provinces and the federal Government agreed to a distinct Quebec society without that being precisely defined. They also agreed to a provision with respect to the spending power without that being precisely defined. I agree that we need not precisely define those two things. On the other hand, if there is no need to define those provisions in the Meech Lake Accord, surely that should not be used as an objection against aboriginal self-government, which I also believe need not be precisely defined in order to agree to it.

There is an additional reason to request in the Meech Lake Accord a commitment to another First Ministers' Conference on aboriginal self-government. That is, Quebec is now in the process and there is now a much greater chance of something being agreed to. It will be easier to get agreement of seven provinces representing 50 per cent of the population. I refer to Section 16 of the Langevin resolution which is a non-derogation clause for aboriginal people and the multicultural heritage of Canada. While that was a step in the right direction, it is not complete. If we think this thing through, I think we should admit that the non-derogation clause should not only apply to Article 2 but to the entire Accord. In other words, I think it should read that nothing in the Meech Lake Accord should derogate from the rights of aboriginal peoples as set out in Section 25 and Section 35, and so on, of the Constitutional Act of 1982.

I note it is one o'clock. I believe I have some time left.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** When the debate resumes, the Hon. Member will have two minutes in his debate and 10 minutes of questions and comments.

It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock this day.

At 1 p.m. the House took recess.

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**AFTER RECESS**

The House resumed at 2 p.m.