

S. O. 21

Albertans feel very strongly. When they look at the area of Senate reform, they argue for what is commonly called a Triple E Senate—equal, effective, and elected.

I should like to touch briefly upon what that means. The term “elected” is a very obvious one. We feel that Senators at present have the authority of their position but do not have any moral authority. What moral authority do they have? How many people from Alberta, Quebec, or Ontario can name the Senators of their provinces? I am willing to bet that very few can. Why? It is because Senators are not in any way accountable to them. Therefore I argue, as do other Albertans, that our Senators must be elected.

We are also looking for an effective Senate which, as a result of being elected, has the moral authority to act, the right to represent their regional interests, and the responsibility and collective consent of the provinces and the people they represent, not the present situation.

The third area of the so-called Triple E Senate is “equal”. As Hon. Members and Canadians know, the Senate is equal on a regional basis right now. Advocates of the Triple E Senate are proposing that we move from not only being regionally balanced but that we start to look at provincial balance. I would argue for that because I think it is important. We have population balances in the House of Commons. For example, Quebec has more Members of Parliament than does Saskatchewan, and Ontario has more Members of Parliament than does Nova Scotia. Why can we not take these balances and put them in the Senate? Why can we not define, represent, and be concerned with regional concerns? Why can there not be equal numbers of people from each province? I obviously support that concept as do Albertans in general. This is why they were so concerned about the Accord and the impact it may have upon Senate reform.

I argue, as I have already said, that the Accord does not diminish our opportunity for Senate reform. I will come back to that in my next point which I think is so crucial, that is, the whole question of a veto with regard to federal institutions or the unanimity which is now required for amendment. This was also very crucial to Albertans. For example, if under present circumstances someone decided to put in place an unelected Senate which would be reformed in some other way, right now seven of 10 provinces might well agree to that, with the Province of Alberta not agreeing and in fact being very angry and frustrated with the proposal. Under present circumstances our hands would be tied. We would have no opportunity to block the process.

However, with the Meech Lake Accord Albertans have a chance. They have an ace in the poker game on Senate reform. I think it is crucial and important to Albertans. It assures us that we as Albertans will see what we want to see, particularly in the area of Senate reform, but not only in that area.

I want to close my comments by paying a compliment to Premier Don Getty of the Province of Alberta. I looked at the Meech Lake Accord and at what resulted there, and I must say as an Albertan that I was pleased to see his fingerprints and his involvement in the process. I was pleased to see how he brought an Albertan perspective to a document which is significant nationally and fundamental to our constitutional history and future. I think Don Getty very much represented Albertans in a way which all of us can be proud of. I think that is demonstrated in the kinds of things about which I have talked in the last few moments.

I should also like to talk a little about process, but I see that it is approaching one o'clock. If I may call it one o'clock and continue at three o'clock, I would feel better than breaking my speech in the middle of it.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Is there unanimous consent to call it one o'clock?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): 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.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 21

[*Translation*]

TRANSPORT
ANGUS SHOPS—OPPORTUNITY TO REASSURE RESIDENTS OF MONTREAL EAST

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, on Monday I met with spokesmen for the workers of the Angus shops in Montreal East. They told me that the company has laid off 1,000 workers over the past five years, that unfortunately there are only 1,116 employees left in these Montreal east shops, and that as early as next week 40 jobs will be transferred to western Canada.

Mr. Speaker, CP management did not bother to tell the employees nor the people who live in the neighbourhood of these shops. I would urge the Minister of State for Transport (Mrs. Vézina) to meet with these workers to tell them that the Angus shops will stay in Montreal east and that neighbouring residents may rest assured that company operations will be maintained.

I dare hope the Minister of State for Transport will heed our advice and get in touch with CP management so as to reassure these people who have had to cope with steadily declining employment in Montreal east.