

*The Constitution*

that guy on one side and with murderer's row on the other, God help the poor federal government. He had to chase his ministers out of Quebec and make peace with Lesage. He chased them out to some other place. I was so embarrassed at that show, I never mentioned co-operative federalism for years after. Let us conclude with some positive things. Let us agree that we want to make these changes to the constitution to make it even better. Let us agree this is going to take time, not just three months. I would suggest it will take something like two or three years. I have a whole list of proposals I intend to offer on a later occasion. Let me start with little steps.

● (2100)

I heard the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) speak here the other night in this regard. Let us start with the eastern provinces, and let us determine in this debate that while we are debating the matter we are not going to stop action. Let us put the matter to a committee which will bring justice to P.E.I., Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Of all the provinces, those provinces have never received the same treatment as the six western provinces. This Parliament amended the British North America Act and made Quebec bigger, Ontario bigger, Manitoba bigger, B.C. bigger and set up the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan with good size. Why have we not done the same for those four eastern provinces? The resources underneath the sea are just as valuable as those above the sea. Let us make P.E.I. just as big as Manitoba and the others the same. In that way the first ministers will sit down at the table and we will not look at a premier and say he has only 2,000 square miles in his province while we have 350,000. He would then be equal when we are meeting to discuss ideas.

Second, let us start to look at our budgeting. Let us take these greedy hands of the finance people off our backs. When I talk about "our backs" I mean the people's backs. Instead of increasing taxes, with all the quantitative evidence we have that increasing taxes reduces the taxtake, stops growth and so on, let us decrease the taxes on those things people need and want and in that way get more money in to balance the budget. Some of you have heard me on this subject many times before. I have all the evidence in the world to show that it works.

Third, as a central demonstration of good faith to those Arabs out in western Canada let us repeal the Petroleum Administration Act as being unconstitutional and inequitable. I said it was unconstitutional when we had the debate. The provinces said this primarily. It was suggested there was an energy crisis when there was not. This scared the daylight out of the judges of the supreme courts and they ruled there was a "peace, order and good government" situation. We now have this legislation sitting there like a sword over every resource province, and that means everyone. Before I am finished I want to see P.E.I. just as strong as Ontario.

I will not go through all the things that were done. I am simply saying that in our budget and in our legislation we ought to treat all Canadians as equals.

I want to say a personal word about the tragedy I see unfolding in respect of a man by the name of Claude Ryan. I have known him for a number of years and have disagreed with him most of the time. He went to work and produced a plan designed to maintain a federal system and meet some of the aspirations of Quebec. I could not agree to all those things nor could anyone else, but he did work and try. He got us all in from all across the country supporting him on his views on the referendum. Then this strategy came out and bang, bang, bang, the whole constitution is to be completed in three months in the summer and two weeks in the fall. Why should a man like this be destroyed? What failure has he experienced that he should be subject to this type of unusual cruelty? I think we have done a great injustice to a great Canadian, Mr. Ryan. He has a right to his opinion and so has Lévesque. He is a Canadian and I am darn sure he will be until he dies. He is not going to move out.

We would serve our country well if we stopped banging each other around carrying out these scam operations, and instead did as many of the speakers of this House have suggested, the hon. member for Waterloo (Mr. McLean), for example. Hon. members have been telling us something about the making of a constitution with the inclusion of rights. Let us work at giving more freedoms to Canadian people. Let us not try to fool them that this will provide them with everything they want for forever and after. Let us do the best we can and above all make certain there is no evidence of a single government, either at the provincial or at the federal level, trying to ram something down our throats. You do not force Canadians, Mr. Speaker, you lead them. That is my conclusion.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans):** Mr. Speaker, during the last fifty years many initiatives were meant to shape this country in the image of its inhabitants. As a nation we have experienced the industrial and technological developments of the post-war period. We have also lived through the social and cultural disruptions of the sixties and we have witnessed the rise of regional nationalisms which emerged at the political and economic levels. All that occurred mainly during the last decade.

Assuredly, it is one of the reasons that explains why it is urgent and necessary to revise the federative agreement. We find this task difficult—and the speeches I just heard confirm this—because of the need to reconcile the various interests of the provinces and those of a national government which represents each of us wherever we live in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, like the Fathers of Confederation, we must be visionaries and perhaps make our own the spirit which sustained them, a certain generosity and above all a sense of audacity before a task they certainly deemed difficult.

[*English*]

The resolution before the House comes at a time when it is incumbent upon the government to act in order to break the political paralysis created by the lack of agreement at federal-