

*Government Orders*

our differences, and granted they are real, together we are stronger.

I believe there is a growing hope for a united and a stronger Canada which will include our friends in Quebec. That is why my colleagues and I support a renewed process of reconciliation. We very much want to see a renewed Canada, a just Canada, and in particular, a united Canada.

It will take more than simply a commitment to constitutional change. It means a commitment to building a fair and a prosperous economy. It means a commitment to maintaining our national health and social programs. It means a commitment to restoring health to our natural environment.

Today we are debating a constitutional resolution and how we as a Parliament will seek consensus which will hopefully lead us more united into the 21st century.

The success of Canada is dependent upon the full participation of Canadians in the process of national renewal. Regrettably, this motion before the House does not allow that full participation. The people of Canada have spoken loud and clear. They want to be involved. They no longer trust this government. They no longer trust the politicians. They want to have a hand in the process in a very fundamental way. They do not want to leave their future and the future of their children in the hands of the political process because that political process has failed them before. They do not want it to fail again.

Enough of the back room deals and enough of the rolling of the dice, they are not willing to have their children's future simply gambled away.

The government response to this challenge levelled by Canadians, after all the commissions and studies, is to strike another parliamentary committee, a committee in which the government has control, a committee in which the government calls the shots, a committee in which the government shuffles the deck and deals the cards, and in which unelected senators, believe it or not, will have a say and perhaps the balance of power in the outcome of this process. It is a committee of politicians speaking to more politicians. Once again the Canadian people are on the outside looking in, and that is unacceptable. It is time to bring real people into the process.

Both the Liberal opposition and the Conservative government have adopted the proposal for this committee of self-interest. My colleagues and I have to reject this proposal. There is a need for involving the Canadian people at a fundamentally different level, and that is ignored in this committee proposal.

My colleagues and I have proposed a constituent assembly, a process where Canadian people can become involved and can take part in the decisions that affect the future of this nation. A nation can only create a Constitution through a process of social consensus, and the best way to reach that social consensus is through such a constituent assembly.

Earlier this evening the Liberal member from Papi-neau called a constituent assembly a flight of fancy. If our Liberal and Conservative friends call listening to the voice of the people of Canada a flight of fancy, then I submit we are in deep trouble indeed.

The Constitution of Canada, the future of this nation, does not belong to this government. It belongs to the people of Canada and, by God, they must be able to have a say and be able to participate in that future.

As was mentioned earlier tonight by my colleague for Port Moody—Coquitlam, 68 per cent of the Canadian people want a constituent assembly. Canadians are calling for a larger role in this process of constitutional reform. The government's response has been to appoint another committee and to appoint 10 unelected, unrepresentative senators to that committee who may well hold the balance of power in the deliberations of that committee. That is unacceptable to the Canadian people. More politicians and more hidden agendas are unacceptable.

My colleagues in the New Democratic Party and I are not opposed to the concept of parliamentary committees, but this constitutional impasse, this crisis that we face, is an extraordinary situation. It is time that we explored new solutions and explored the utilization of new tools to resolve those problems.

We have to turn away from the old ways and from the old ideas. A constituent assembly, I submit, could well be that new way Canadians are looking for. It would bring Canadians back into the process of national renewal. The voices of Canada would most assuredly be heard.