

and because it was a particularly delicate time to be dealing with it.

However, there was a realization that if we needed to do it, and a grudging acceptance that perhaps it was necessary because perhaps economic development is linked to constitutional stability, then there were a number of urgent priorities. If I have understood my constituents well, as well as fellow Canadians who have spoken to me as I have travelled with the constitutional committee, these are the most important concerns. There is an acceptance, a desire, that the inherent right to self-government for Canada's aboriginal peoples be realized; that there be a reformed Senate. There is a clear preference for the Triple-E. They want a Canada clause that truly reflects the reality of a very diverse multicultural, pluralistic Canada. They ask that we deal with the division of powers without neglecting the minorities and what they have acquired over time. The question of distinct society for Quebec is also a great concern and one that needs to be dealt with.

• (2130)

Although there is a sense that accommodation is necessary, the message is really quite clear. The message is as follows: It is not appropriate to move on just one of those main points, the distinct society, a reformed Senate, aboriginal self-government, the Canada clause or the division of powers. We must move on all of them in order to get an agreement that will respond to as many needs of as many Canadians in as many parts of the country as is possible. There will be very little progress unless we can do so.

I should point out that Canadians from my constituency and I think throughout the country want a Canada clause that reflects the values and visions we have as Canadians. They also want the preamble to properly reflect the founding nations of this country and the contributions of all of those who have chosen Canada to make their home.

The division of powers is presenting a real challenge to many Canadians. We have used asymmetrical federalism as a possible way out, but it makes a lot of people nervous. They are not sure what it means, whether or not we will grant special status, whether or not we will favour a particular group over others. They want that looked at very carefully.

The Constitution

They are very worried about weakening the power of the federal government with respect to a number of programs: medicare, education, language rights for official minorities, culture and communications.

Among the constituents of St. Boniface, the economic proposals in the government's package are very important. They wondered whether or not the best way to treat it was within the Constitution. They also wanted a possible inclusion of social rights within the Constitution.

I would like to thank all Canadians, particularly my constituents of St. Boniface, for having contributed to this debate, for having informed me and for having enriched my life. I believe that the nation is still at risk, but if we are willing to look at each other's needs and respond generously to them, Canada can become a stronger, more united country.

I wish to complete my remarks by saying that we should build a nation by protecting rights, by building upon them and by responding to those who have been neglected with an appropriate and generous response.

I want to remind the House of what Sir John A. Macdonald had to say about this country a little over 100 years ago. I shall complete it very quickly. It is a statement which is very applicable today, and I quote:

If I had influence over the minds of the people of Canada, any power over their intellect; I would leave them with the legacy: whatever you do, adhere to the union. We are a great country and shall become one of the greatest in the universe if we preserve it.

We shall sink into insignificance and adversity if we suffer it to be broken.

God and nature have made the two Canadas one. Let no factious man be allowed to put them asunder.

Mr. Dave Worthy (Cariboo—Chilcotin): Madam Speaker, home for me is Cariboo—Chilcotin, an area of the country that is truly spectacular and is matched only by its residents who are friendly, feisty and definitely outspoken. They would be the first ones to tell you that they are Canadians first and British Columbians second.

Over the past months many of these proud Canadians from the Cariboo have expressed their concerns to me. Some have written, some have stopped me on the street and others have dropped into my office. Most recently I was able to attend and participate in four town meetings organized by different communities.