

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear! Hear!

**Mrs. Maily:** The Conservatives.

**Mr. Nystrom:** Not only the Conservatives. Three parties we represented in the Saskatchewan legislative assembly and except for three members, everyone supported the resolution, including the Liberal member Mr. Ralph Goodale and the NDP opposition. However, I have a serious question for the Hon. Member. If the Liberal amendments in the name of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) were accepted, I am afraid this would be the end of the Meech Lake Accord because I think that many amendments are not go conducive to a distinct society and duality, as they talk about the supremacy of the Charter of Rights and so on.

I would like to know if the Hon. Member is in favour of the amendments of his Party; does he think that the package of amendments of his Party will in fact mean the end of the Lake Meech Accord, if they were accepted in this House?

**Mr. Malépart:** No, Mr. Speaker. If the proposed amendments are accepted by Mr. Robert Bourassa, I am convinced there will be no change because I know that at the negotiation table, Mr. Bourassa will protect Quebecers very well. Are the Hon. members... When we added something in 1982 to protect women, it did not harm the Accord; can the Hon. Member tell me whether or not it would jeopardize the concept of distinct society if we added something to protect native people, and if the provincial First Ministers agreed? I do not think this is what he means. If the Hon. Member tells me that if he provinces accepted the recommendation of the Leader to add to the Charter the protection for cultural communities, this would not be an impediment. I do not think that Mr. Robert Bourassa of Quebec would oppose vigorously protection for cultural communities, because he is one of those who protect cultural communities in Quebec, which the Prime Minister of Canada does not do.

[English]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Resuming debate with the Hon. Member for Windsor—Walkerville (Mr. McCurdy).

**Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—Walkerville):** Mr. Speaker, that exchange occurred rather abruptly, and caught me just momentarily off guard.

I think it is important that the debate on the Meech Lake Accord occur on the highest plane. I must say that I hope that my contribution will shed rather more light than the heat that moments ago was being shed upon the debate.

I am not a historian and I am not a constitutional expert. But I do know this: It is not possible to have a perfect Constitution. It is no more possible to have a perfect Constitution than it is to have a country that does not experience evolution in terms of its sociological, political and demographic characteristics. Constitutions must reflect that. They cannot be perfect. The Accord that we debate today and the Constitution

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that it seeks to amend are not perfect. Both are deficient. But both must be judged on what they intend to accomplish.

The Accord must be judged on what it is supposed to do and what in fact it does. The Constitution must be judged, in its newly amended form, on whether or not it reflects the Canada of now, and whether it is capable of reflecting the evolution of Canada as it will be.

First, I will address the Accord, what it intends to accomplish, whether it in fact accomplishes its purpose, and I will consider in what respects it is flawed. Most particularly, after looking at whether it indeed fulfils its role, I will consider what message it sends out to the people of this country. It will be my suggestion that no matter whether the Accord fulfils what it intends to fulfil or not, the Constitution that it amends remains as a consequence flawed and the message that it sends to one-third of the people of this country is seriously flawed.

It is perhaps, I think, appropriate that I review what it is in my experience that shapes my view of this country. I was born in London, Ontario, and initially I was brought up there. At that time the vision that I had of Canada was entirely English; indeed, it was imperial. I sang "Rule Britannia", celebrating the empire that subjugated my own people in other lands, while at the same time not treated as an equal in my own land.

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Subsequently I moved to Amherstburg, Ontario, next to the American border. As a consequence of that, the view of Canada that I learned in London became somewhat deluded and rather more coloured by our proximity to the United States. Increasingly, I was not very conscious of the differences that existed between Canada and our close-by neighbour.

[Translation]

It is during my first visit in Quebec that I recognized that this country is different. It is during my first visit that I felt I was equal in my own country.

[English]

Let me repeat that, because however I may value the two languages of this country, I sometimes speak in a fashion that devalues French.

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa—Carleton):** You are doing fine, Howard.

**Mr. McCurdy:** Let me make it perfectly clear what I am saying. During my first visit to the Province of Quebec I realized there was something different and unique about this country. In my experience at that time, what was different about this country was the French fact. It was in Quebec that for the first time in my own country that I was treated as an equal. From that point my notion of this country began to evolve into what it is now. Since that time this country has changed; it has changed so much that I stand in this Chamber.

In the debate on the Meech Lake Accord there has been some discussion of the place of the aboriginal peoples. Perhaps