

*Government Orders*

[Translation]

This province is a microcosm of the Canadian federal reality. On our home ground, by working devotedly, making compromises and above all respecting the reality of others, we have succeeded in creating a climate of understanding that is conducive to fruitful and satisfactory linguistic arrangements.

As you know, the constitutional amendment we are debating today had a proper place in the Charlottetown agreement. When the referendum was held, more than 60 per cent of my compatriots voted in favour of the constitutional agreement laid before them.

In other words, not only did they support the constitutional amendment that particularly affected them, but they were still sufficiently generous to accept the other compromises that would have put us on the road to greater national solidarity and consequently greater prosperity.

However that may be, the possibility of such a bilateral constitutional resolution is provided for in section 43 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

[English]

New Brunswick has always been a haven for our two linguistic communities. Many Acadian men and women found refuge there after the deportation in 1755. It was there that the Loyalists, fleeing the United States, established a home following the Treaty of Paris in 1783.

Today this tradition of hospitality to strangers is still very strong among us. New citizens come from all over the world with the goal of building here, with us, a bright future for themselves and their descendants.

[Translation]

This constitutional amendment will strengthen this social fabric and give it a permanent foundation. It is also a splendid and significant step forward for the men and women in New Brunswick involved in a continuing search for harmony based on self-confidence and openness to others.

[English]

I fervently hope that this example of respect for differences, of tolerance toward cultural diversity and of receptiveness to others spreads throughout Canada. Despite the difficulties that have sometimes marred the

development of our national identity, the truth is that we have more things in common to celebrate than we have differences to define.

[Translation]

A historic moment such as we are experiencing today, at the beginning of this holiday season when we celebrate men and women of good will, can only strengthen us in our sincere desire to extend the productive lessons of New Brunswick's experience to Canada.

[English]

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, I am very proud to get up today in this House to support the motion. It is not every day that I agree with the Minister of Employment and Immigration, but I am delighted to get up today to support his motion.

[Translation]

As you all know, becoming the member for Beauséjour was probably one of the finest moments of my political career.

[English]

To get up today and to speak on this motion gives me great pleasure. The minister referred to an historic moment and it is, indeed, a big one.

It is Canada at its best. This is the generosity, the tolerance, the diversity that has made this country what it is. This is what we are enshrining in the Constitution for New Brunswick.

[Translation]

Going around that riding in the past two years, I realized that a third of my constituents were English-speaking and two-thirds were French-speaking. They all live together, but they have their own schools. They share a common life but are separate at the same time.

[English]

When you are in Sackville, Dorchester, Cape Tormentine, Port Elgin, you have people who came from the United States to Canada. They were Loyalists who wanted to remain part of what they believed in. In those days it was the British Empire. They did not want to join the American revolution.