

## PATENT ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—ORDER STANDS

On the Order:

Resuming the debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Cogger, seconded by the Honourable Senator David, for the second reading of the Bill C-22, An Act to amend the Patent Act and to provide for certain matters in relation thereto.—(*Honourable Senator Doody*).

**Hon. Orville H. Phillips:** Honourable senators, while this item is adjourned in the name of Senator Doody, he is willing to yield to any other senator who wishes to speak on it.

Order stands.

[Translation]

## THE CONSTITUTION

MOTION TO REFER FIRST MINISTERS' ACCORD AND AGREED TEXTS TO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming the debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator MacEachen, P.C., seconded by the Honourable Senator Frith:

That the Meech Lake Constitutional Accord and texts subsequently agreed to be referred to a Committee of the Whole for the purpose of hearing witnesses and making a report.—(*Honourable Senator Murray, P.C.*).

**Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations):** Honourable senators, the motion before us has to do with the parliamentary procedure to be followed in the case of the resolution to amend the Constitution.

I do not intend today to speak to the subject matter of the resolution itself. In the near future I will have an opportunity to open the debate on the motion in this House. However my position and that of the government are very well known.

However the position of the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate is not as clear. He did not take the opportunity—

**Senator Frith:** The Leader of the Opposition in the Senate?

**Senator Murray:** The position of the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate is not very well known.

Senator MacEachen did not take the opportunity of his speech last June 2 to state clearly his position on the constitutional project. As far as I know he has yet to endorse, at least publicly, the courageous, crystal-clear and unequivocal position of his national leader, the Right Honourable John Turner.

Still, the statement on the Meech Lake accord made in this house by the Leader of the Opposition last May 5 as well as his interventions during the oral question period since then enable us to draw certain conclusions concerning his approach to this project.

According to his May 5 statement, the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate claims that the accord would represent a significant shift of power and authority from the Parliament of Canada to the provinces. He seems to denote a

[Senator Phillips.]

weakening of Parliament and the federal government to the benefit of the provinces.

During the oral question periods since May 5, Senator MacEachen, with the support of Senators Frith and Stewart (Antigonish-Guysborough), has led an attack against the Meech Lake accord.

**Hon. Senators:** No.

**Senator Murray:** They all seem very concerned, if not scandalized, about the recognition of Quebec as a distinct society within Canada in the Constitution and about what they see as the implications. Most of their questions and comments in the house on the Constitution were, in fact, about the issue of recognizing Quebec as a distinct society in our Constitution.

As my colleague, Senator Phillips, said yesterday, considering the tone and scope of the questions and comments we heard from these three senators, we may conclude they are not lining up behind their present leader, Mr. Turner, but behind the former leader, the Right Honourable Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

We do not know whether the Liberal caucus in the Senate supports the approach taken by the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, or if the Liberal senators stand solidly behind their national leader, Mr. Turner.

In any case, honourable senators, there are several aspects of the public debate on the Constitutional accord on which I would like to comment briefly this afternoon.

First, I notice to my great satisfaction the very positive reception given by Canadians to the accord. According to all the polls, Canadians support the accord by a very impressive majority. Fifty-one per cent are in favour, 27 per cent are against, and 21 per cent are undecided, according to the poll by *Maclean's* magazine. In fact, all the components of the accord seem to be receiving solid support in the various polls.

What is even more satisfying and revealing is the massive support shown by Quebecers. The headline in *Le Devoir* of June 4: "Canada says yes to Quebec", seems to summarize in one sentence what a majority of Quebecers had been waiting for since 1982.

This accord will enable Quebec to take its place at the constitutional table with, to borrow a phrase from Prime Minister Mulroney, "honour and enthusiasm". I think our fellow Canadians are very impressed with the unanimous support the accord received from the eleven First Ministers. Canadians have waited a long time for a sign that federal and provincial governments are capable of working together in the national interest.

Fortunately, this unanimous support is now being echoed in the Parliament of Canada, at least by the leaders of the three political parties in the House of Commons. And as I have said before, we must not forget the extraordinary leadership and national vision of Prime Minister Mulroney, without whom this accord would not have been achieved.

May I also commend Mr. Turner and Mr. Broadbent, who are giving the constitutional proposal a non-partisan aspect