

*Constitution Acts*

invited to constitutional conferences. There was a bit of hedge in that, I admit. The hedge was that the Prime Minister had to agree that those matters were of concern to the territorial governments. I would ask my hon. friends in the House if they can give me one subject that would ever be debated or discussed at a First Ministers Conference that would not be of concern or of interest to the North? I cannot think of one. Even though that hedge was built in, I think, on careful analysis, it was not a serious one.

• (1500)

The second thing that the Accord of 1983 planned to do, if it had ever been completed, was to repeal paragraphs 42(1)(e) and (f). That would have returned the situation to what it was before, that is, extending boundaries or creating new provinces could not be done through the amending formula. It could only be done bilaterally between the people of the territories and the Government of Canada. That is the way Saskatchewan was created in 1905. My grandfather was a member of that territory and strongly advocated provincehood in 1950.

In 1905, the province from which you and I have origins, Mr. Speaker—you still, I am a deserter—was carved out of the Northwest Territories through an arrangement between the people there and the Government of Canada. It was bilateral. Why should that be changed? In the United States of America, a new state is created between the people of that state who are seeking statehood and the Government in Washington. The same thing applies in Australia and India. Why do we have this bizarre system in Canada that requires that the amending formula be imposed upon the aspirations of people who live in the North?

In 1949, when Newfoundland sought membership in Confederation it did not have to get the consent of Saskatchewan or Alberta. Instead of repealing paragraphs 42(1)(e) and (f) what we did in the Meech Lake Accord was to make matters worse. Now, instead of seven provinces with 50 per cent of the population, there has to be unanimity. What we did was to impose constitutional injustice upon the people who live in the North. Why did we do it? Did Québec demand that? I never heard any person in Québec say that that was a necessary price for their signature on our Constitution. It can only be described as an injustice. That is why the Hon. Member for the Yukon, the Hon. Member for the Western Arctic (Mr. Nickerson), and myself, among others, voted against the Meech Lake Accord.

The road back to justice and fairness for the North will be a long and difficult one. Constitutional changes are always long and difficult. However, if today we can approve Motion No. 204 in the name of the Hon. Member for the Yukon, we would at least be taking a step in the right direction. It would mean that in the future territorial leaders would be able to sit down with Premiers and the Prime Minister and discuss their concerns and give their input.

I wish to tell the Hon. Member for the Yukon that she is in very good company in what she is proposing. The task force on the Meech Lake constitutional Accord, which was written by the Senate, supports that proposition. In 1986, the plenary session of the Liberal Party of Canada passed a resolution that was submitted by the Yukon Liberal Association supporting what the Hon. Member for the Yukon is proposing, and that was a priority resolution which passed in the plenary.

I wish to turn to the document that was prepared by the Special Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on the 1987 Constitutional Accord. This document talked about difficult questions that had to be dealt with at First Ministers Conferences, difficult questions concerning the legitimate interests of the existing provinces without unfairly prejudicing the development of the North. On those difficult questions the document states:

It would appear from the evidence that we have heard that not all of these matters have been addressed in the necessary detail to allow decisions to be made by First Ministers at this time.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, and I ask my friends in the House, how can these difficult questions be considered? How can they be resolved? If the territorial leaders are absent from First Ministers Conferences, they cannot. Therefore, I say to you, Sir, and I say to my friends in the House, that Motion No. 204 in the name of the Hon. Member for the Yukon deserves full, unanimous, and unequivocal support of the House, and not to support it without equivocation and reservation is clearly an insult to northerners.

I want to leave the last word on this matter to a man for whom I have respect and admiration and who has done a fine job in his leadership in the North, the Leader of the Territorial Government in the Yukon. He appeared before the joint committee talking about the constitutional unfairness imposed upon the North by the Meech Lake Accord and he stated: "The right to be heard and to have reasons given for the decisions which affect our rights are fundamental. It is fundamentally unfair that our fate should be decided by others. It should not happen at ministerial meetings at which we are not represented". I say to Mr. Tony Penikett, Leader of the Government in the Yukon, I and my Party agree with you fully on that.

**Mr. David Daubney (Ottawa West):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity this afternoon to contribute to the debate on the motion of the Hon. Member for the Yukon (Ms. McLaughlin) who is a recently arrived Member in this place for whom I have a high regard. The Hon. Member is a fair-minded Member who was good enough to give credit to the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) in her remarks for his role in national reconciliation. I had hoped that perhaps she would have taken a minute today while she had the floor to tell Canadians, particularly her constituents, that today the unemployment rate in the Yukon Territory is the lowest it has been since 1975.