

The Constitution

When I start negotiating how to provide these skills and this training I find, increasingly, provincial barriers to the movement of labour or certification laws which provide that people cannot work in a certain place because they do not have a white piece of paper—their paper is not the right colour. When we try to sign training agreements with industries in western Canada, right away the provincial governments say we cannot have training agreements with their industries. When we talk about introducing affirmative action programs to make sure there is equal opportunity for native people, the provincial governments tell us they do not believe in affirmative action. They claim there is no inequality in their provinces and they do not have affirmative actions, and therefore the agreement cannot be signed.

Our capacity and ability to provide some degree of management of the human resources which are absolutely essential for the development of the west, are being hindered and handicapped by the increasing growth of provincial barriers to the mobility and movement of people. They are being hindered and handicapped by the increasing number of labour laws and provincial human rights codes which prevent federal activity providing those skills and opportunities. We cannot build the west with those kinds of barriers, Mr. Speaker. We cannot fulfil our destiny unless there is some jurisdiction that provides comprehensive management. The people must come from somewhere. They cannot come from under the ground like the oil and gas. They must come from other parts of Canada or from offshore and someone has to manage that movement. That is one of the great tasks of our time.

An hon. Member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Axworthy: The hon. member opposite does not have to believe that. He can stay on his couch. He can hide his head in the sand, that is his prerogative, but it happens to be the reality about the new western fact that there is going to be a tremendous movement of people which somehow must be managed with some degree of care and concern. The federal government is doing it right now because the provinces are not prepared to or are not in a position to.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Axworthy: Let us now talk about resource management—all right, we will cut off all the grants in your provinces and see how much they are going to react in Ottawa! If you think it is a big handicap, we will see. We will call your bluff on that one.

Let us talk about resource management. We hear a great deal about the provincial premiers and how they want to make sure they can manage the oil and gas and the coal and the electricity. What we do not hear about them is how they are going to manage the forests or the farms in those areas. It is a fact that the condition of the soil in the west is deteriorating every year and that there is no reforestation being done in western Canada. Those resources are under provincial man-

agement and lie within their jurisdiction. Somehow they have forgotten about resource management. Why? Because there are not as many bucks in those areas as there are in others. What is happening now is that every day coal is being mined. The Minister of DREE and the minister responsible for forestry have applications on their desks asking them to look after the fisheries or the forests or the farms. When they get into trouble they know where the first hand is out—it is the provincial hand out for the federal purse.

That is the way federalism should work, Mr. Speaker. We must recognize, however, that in order to provide that kind of management and control, we need to share in some of the revenues from those resources. We simply cannot be drawing purely upon a tax base which is static and that is a part of what the debate is about. That is why we have to work at changing the rules and why we have to ensure that there is at least an equal sharing of powers over the resources of this country. There is no ambition whatsoever to intervene in existing powers over resources. There is not a line in the resolution that says we are going to take resource powers away from the provinces.

The Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent) made a revelation on Monday. We were very pleased with his constructive comments but he said we forgot the whole question of the provision of powers over resources. We did not forget it, Mr. Speaker; we altered it. We altered it at the conference. It was not forgotten; it was there on the table for the provinces to pick up. They did not pick it up, however, Mr. Speaker. We offered to provide some of our share.

An hon. Member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Axworthy: The hon. member should have opened up earlier. We feel that the issue on the division of powers should still be discussed and debated and negotiated.

There is no point getting into that debate, however, until we have in this Parliament and in our own hands the ability to make changes to our constitution. The history of constitutional change in Canada has been that every time we reach a consensus or agreement and are ready to make a change, we do not have the lever because it is in England. By the time we figure out how to get it, the consensus has changed.

Mr. Kempling: Go back and read history.

Mr. Axworthy: We also consider a debate on resources to be an important debate. It is something that should be looked at as part of constitutional change. It is a critical item in terms of where we go in this country and it is something we have to put in place in this constitution. But other things must come first. We must obtain the power to make the amendments in our own constitution so that when some of those provincial governments change—as the government of Manitoba will change next year and the government of British Columbia the year after and several others—we may get a more progressive point of view from those provinces, allowing us to get back into serious, sharing negotiations. Then we can bring about the