

Constitutional Affairs. Several other individuals have contacted me directly with their views on the proposals.

Although I have given the House a taste of what Fraser Valley residents are thinking, I must make a few qualifying statements about some of the comments that stand out from the rest.

People who have been to Quebec generally hold views that are different from the majority of those constituents who have not. These people found Quebecers to be warm and generous. They found that the hospitality was overwhelming and that in reality, the people of Quebec were not much different from any other people they had met.

Sure, they spoke a different language, but they were hard-working people who, much like British Columbians, felt a little left out of the goings on of their government. It seemed that the feelings of alienation were shared.

The British Columbians with whom I spoke and who have visited Quebec often tell me about the history of Quebec and the fact that Quebec is a culture of six million francophones surrounded by a sea of some 20 million anglophones. So maybe they are right to feel a little paranoid about their culture and language.

These British Columbians still do not like the fact that Quebec has a sign law which limits English on outdoor signs. What people are telling me is that we need more understanding. British Columbians feel left out. So do many other Canadians, including Quebecers. In many ways they are not left out at all, but if they feel left out, they are.

The perception often denies the fact. People want to believe they are involved. They want to be part of the larger whole. They want to be heard. They want to see their views acted upon. The perception has to change.

People have to feel that they are included. They have to feel that they are on the same footing with Canadians in other provinces. The only way to do this is to ensure that Canadians understand one another. In the heat of anger many say that this group or that group should go their own way, but when they keep talking and they explore all sides of the issue, they admit that they are simply frustrated and that they really want a united Canada where all people feel included.

### *The Constitution*

My parents came from Shawville, Quebec. They moved to the prairies and I was born in southern Saskatchewan. I live in the Fraser Valley of British Columbia and I am proud to serve my country in this House of Commons.

I am a Canadian and I can tell you that I have a lot in common with my constituents. We are proud Canadians who care deeply about our country. We believe in fairness and we believe in justice. Compromise is fine if the trade-off is mutually beneficial.

We know there are certain costs involved with keeping the country together, especially a country as broad and diverse as Canada. We in the Fraser Valley, much like Canadians from other parts of Canada, want to be understood. We want to be included.

In closing, I would like to share with you a quote from a letter I recently received, simply signed "John". This constituent writes: "My deepest hope is that our country will be able to elect some leaders who can distinguish between good and bad proposals and act accordingly, leaders who stand for what they see to be right. I trust that after we have finished this round of consultations, we will be that group of leaders who can indeed distinguish between good and bad proposals and act accordingly and may each of us reach a mutual understanding for our country".

**Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that members of Parliament were given the opportunity such as we have this evening to speak in the House to what the constituents in our ridings have to say on the current constitutional issues before us.

All of the constituents in my riding of Northumberland have indicated to me that as far as they are concerned, the major issue today in this country is the economy. They wish to see our economic circumstances turned around so that we are able to find jobs for all of those who are unemployed, training for those who need new skills, and literacy for those who are unable to cope with reading and writing skills in our society.

On the other hand, although that was recognized as the most important issue, there are many people who spoke to me in my constituency of Northumberland about the issue of the Constitution and how strongly they felt about that.