

Government Orders

French language and culture to North America. The English settlers, the Irish, and the Scots did not come here to make constitutional amendments. They came here to build a nation where their children could grow in freedom and prosperity and peace. They built better than anybody ever dreamed. The result of their sacrifice, their vision, and their courage was Canada. They did that and it is up to us to maintain it and improve upon it.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: Generation upon generation of immigrants were drawn here by this dream from every single country on the face of the earth.

We in the House of Commons are the sons and daughters of those men and women who have given us one of the most beautiful and prosperous, and one of the most free countries in the world.

It is now up to us to live up to that dream and to build a country that they would have wanted us to build for our children.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table, in both official languages, a discussion paper prepared by the Government of Canada entitled: *Amending the Constitution of Canada*.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to provide my party's response this motion to appoint a special committee to inquire and report upon the process for amending the Constitution of Canada.

While the Liberal Party intends to be extremely supportive of this joint committee, we have rather serious concerns and misgivings that I want to point out. I shall be focusing upon the fact that we think this particular committee should have been set up some time ago. In fact, a number of people will wonder if it should not have been set up rather than the Spicer commission. But I will let Canadians judge that.

We are concerned as well about the focus on the amending formula which we believe may be too narrow. We think that the critical question is really the division of powers among the various levels of government.

[*Translation*]

The constitutional amendment formula is obviously a very important element, but as far as we are concerned the key, the most important question is the sharing of powers.

[*English*]

Let me share with my hon. colleagues some of the concerns and misgivings that we have as a party.

• (1150)

There is another committee that has been appointed. There is already much confusion out there in the country. We fear that this will add to that confused state. Why is that? Well, there is the Spicer commission that is looking at the direction that Canadians want Canada to take.

There is the Bélanger-Campeau commission that is looking at the direction that they feel Quebecers want Quebec to take. Alberta has a commission. New Brunswick has a commission. Manitoba has a commission.

We are informed that the Assembly of First Nations has a commission because it does not have confidence in the various commissions that have been set up to date. I am told today that two unions have each now set up a new commission, the Public Service Alliance of Canada and the National Union of Provincial Government Employees.

[*Translation*]

Although the Prime Minister gave a clear explanation about this new committee and raised a number of major issues, it could lead to confusion because I think there are so many similar endeavours now taking place in Canada. People will ask why a new commission, why a new committee? Where will that lead us? Just what will that accomplish?

[*English*]

Many of you will know that the Bélanger-Campeau commission is seen as a well-organized group of people who are actually listening. It is certainly highly visible and, whether or not one likes what it is doing, we have to recognize that it is working extremely well in getting the opinions of various people from the province with respect to the directions that they want to take.