

The Constitution

language wherever numbers warrant. Fourth, the charter will recognize the principle of equalization, which involves the redistribution of wealth among the provinces. Fifth, a flexible amending procedure will ensure that all changes to the constitution can be made in Canada. But to those who may ask: "What about the entrenchment of the division of powers?" I will reply, "First things first: before one learns to run, one must learn to walk."

True, the proposed resolution needs some adjustment. There will be things to add to it, some things to suppress perhaps, and that is why a special joint committee of the House and the Senate is formed, so that we can all express our views. It is urgent to revise the federation compact, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, we find this task difficult, as reflected in the speeches we have heard in the last few days. The better to understand the government purpose, one must place this proposed resolution in its true perspective. And I repeat what has been said already: patriation will not take away any power from the provinces, it will only suppress a power held by the British Parliament and agree we will at last have a truly Canadian Constitution, providing we agree to get together and show a spirit of co-operation.

The constitution adopted in 1867 does not fulfil our needs and aspirations any more. It needs immediate revising, rethinking and rewriting in order for it to meet our new needs and reality. However, it still contains many things that are good, things which only need to be renovated and combined with new elements to create a truly Canadian instrument that would meet our present needs.

A major part of our constitution is dispersed in a multitude of statutes, a number of which are very little known to the Canadian people. And I know the need to go to London cap in hand for constitutional amendments is a cold shower on the proudness of very many Canadians, who view this not simply as an embarrassing subject but a national blemish.

Let us look together at the stages in our evolution. In 1931, Canada's independence was confirmed by the Statute of Westminster. In 1945 the Supreme Court of Canada became the court of last resort, and the Canadian Parliament acquired powers of constitutional amendment, but for areas of provincial jurisdiction. In 1952 we had our first Canadian Governor General. In 1965 we chose our own national flag. This year, in 1980, Parliament adopted a national anthem. The proposed resolution now before us, Mr. Speaker, is the last stage on the road to full independence.

On Monday October 6 I was pleased to hear the leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent) state, and I quote:

It is indeed time to act, and act now, on the Constitution of Canada.

I thank him for it and I know he is sincere, especially after hearing his remarks this afternoon. The opposition motion now before us suggests we should select the so-called Vancouver

consensus as the only amending formula. As the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Social Development (Mr. Chrétien) so eloquently explained earlier, that formula would weaken the central government. I consulted my constituents, Mr. Speaker, and I received a clear and loud message. They want me to support a constitution that will reflect a strong Canada, and for that reason I support the government's position. This afternoon, when the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Social Development, speaking on the motion, referred to basic rights, I heard the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Clark) shout:

[*English*]

"What about the War Measures Act?" I would like to tell the hon. member about the War Measures Act, and anyone in Canada who wants to hear about it. I am a Quebecker who lived in Montreal in those days. One has to remember those things in the context of the time. Bombs were exploding in mail boxes. I have five children. They took the Metro every day and on top of each building and inside the Metro there were people with machine guns. Every night when my children came home, I got on my knees and thanked the Lord that they were alive. That is what it was like in Quebec in 1970 under the War Measures Act. It is no wonder that that measure was right for the time.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Killens: Mr. Speaker I would now like to speak for a few minutes about the two founding peoples of our country with regard to culture and language. Some 113 years ago, when English needed protection, because it was the minority language in Lower Canada, Sir George-Étienne Cartier acknowledged the fact when he said, "If we introduce before the provincial legislatures and the imperial government a resolution for the creation of a central government it will be our duty to protect equally all ethnic groups and take into account the interest of each." The English language was then protected in Quebec. Yet as soon as the demographic balance shifted to the advantage of Anglophones within the country as a whole, justice and tolerance were forsaken and we have been living in this state of injustice ever since the birth of the nation. One must not be surprised then if this is a touchy issue in Quebec because there are still a great many Quebeckers with a long memory. To give you an illustration of what I mean, I will quote Sir John A. Macdonald in an admonition addressed to his fellow English-speaking citizens. He said this in 1856, and I quote:

Leafing through the directory of Lower Canada public servants, you would be surprised to see the supremacy you have in higher positions. Take care that the French do not discover these facts and begin to denounce them.

In spite of a few mistakes concerning language and the economy, Confederation has not been a failure. We still speak French in Quebec. We have developed our own identity and we have a standard of living that many envy us. Some skeptics