

flawed. They are convinced that it is imperative to bring Quebec back into the Constitution and to recognize that province as a distinct society. In short, they are in favour of these changes, while being aware of the fact that it cannot be done without a great deal of openness, flexibility and generosity from both sides.

Acadians are also aware of the fact that they have benefited from the federal official languages policy which has helped their culture flourish since the 1960's and which has helped them obtain, in 1969, the promulgation of the act that made New Brunswick the only Canadian province that is officially bilingual.

In 1981, Bill 88, an act recognizing the equality of the two official linguistic communities in New Brunswick, was passed unanimously by the provincial legislature. If we cannot agree on what is required to promote and protect what Acadians have acquired, I insist that Bill 88 must be entrenched in the Constitution because, as I said to Prime Minister Mulroney and Premier McKenna in February 1991, and I quote: "In this time of uncertainty and at the dawn of profound and dramatic changes that will forever transform the face of Canada, the entrenchment of Bill 88 represents a concrete and positive measure for the most dynamic francophone minority in the country, the Acadian community of New Brunswick".

The unrelenting efforts of those men and women who contributed to the development of Acadia for more than two centuries must be used as an example and a source of inspiration to help us ensure the future of our children as francophones in this new Canada.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when you read *Shaping Canada's Future Together* where federal proposals are listed, you notice the concept of preservation of linguistic minorities outside Quebec. I think Acadians in New Brunswick are far beyond that stage. Our Constitution should entrench the promotion of minority groups in Canada as opposed to mere preservation. In that regard I share the following recommendation by Victor Goldbloom, our Official Languages Commissioner: "We recommend the inclusion in the charter of the goal of promoting French and English speaking minorities in Canada and support their development".

The Constitution

The constitutional reform Acadians want cannot be negotiated without taking into account a number of basic principles such as national unity, primacy of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and recognition of fundamental linguistic rights.

Other principles are necessary such as the stated role of the federal government in equalization, regional development and support for essential ingredients of national identity, including the protection of official language minorities. Linguistic duality cannot be restricted to a Quebec-Canada relationship and to the recognition of a few linguistic rights in the Constitution. Mr. Speaker, linguistic duality should include recognition of linguistic communities which have a legal status and are endowed with the means to assert their cultural sovereignty and representativeness. That is why I support the following recommendation found in the report of the New Brunswick committee on Canadian federalism. I quote:

That the Constitution be amended to include a clause recognizing the equal status, rights and privileges of the English and French communities in New Brunswick and that this equality include namely the right to have different educational and cultural institutions necessary to protect and promote both communities.

As the years went by, the Acadian community succeeded in setting up homogeneous linguistic institutions in the fields of education and culture as well as in the social and economic fields. Acadians are proud of this success which enabled them to progress at all levels and to stop the plague of assimilation.

Acadians have a future full of promise and it should be even more brilliant if their institutions are protected from hazardous political decisions.

If the federal government takes into account the claims of New Brunswick Acadians, both men and women, Acadian communities in the other Atlantic provinces could benefit from it.

The leadership shown by New Brunswick Acadians regarding constitutional matters is not an isolated initiative within the big Acadian family, but a well-considered strategy that 230,000 Acadians in New Brunswick chose so that their brothers and sisters in other provinces can benefit from their eventual gains.