

to the developing countries. Every now and again we hear the little remark that we are still a colony.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Whelan: We hear people say that we do not have our constitution at home. Here we are, the great mature country called Canada, and we are scared of something—I do not know what it is—of fear itself is about the only way I could describe it. But I do not understand some of the things that are being said about bringing the constitution here and about the way it is being done.

One can look at the records and see how often prime ministers and leaders of this country, of every political faith, Conservative and Liberal, ever since 1921 have tried and tried to bring the constitution to its rightful home, where it has never been, and failed because they could never come to an agreement.

I hear this talk about closure. I think it is so funny when that group over there talks about the rights and privileges of Parliament. My God, Mr. Speaker, they loved Parliament so much they were not going to let us use it last year because they kept us out of this place so long.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan: Never in our history since confederation from the time an election was called until the House of Commons reconvened, the lovers of freedom and the lovers of democracy on the other side of the House did not even want to let us use this great institution. They wanted to run a country without Parliament. It was the longest time since confederation—

An hon. Member: That is not true.

Mr. Whelan: Now these are the people, the great freedom-lovers of Parliament. One of the members earlier—I forget his name and his riding—he talked about Alberta. He talked about us being a group of dictators and he said all kinds of horrible things. I could not help but think about an article I read in the paper the other day. It concerned one member of Parliament in Alberta who was brave enough to disagree with that great democratic institution called the Conservative party of Alberta. What did they do? They threw him out.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan: They threw him out because he disagreed. He could no longer be part of that great democratic party, the Conservative party of Alberta under Peter Lougheed. He could no longer stay there because he disagreed. Was it because they had a minority position? They don't have any opposition. They now have one more member in the opposition. I believe that brings them up to six in the opposition, so he is going to sit as in independent. I bet he is happy. At least he can say and do what he wants. He can be free and independent.

The Constitution

● (2400)

We use the British parliamentary system. We hear them talking about closure. Who has used closure most in Canada? The Conservative party. Who has been in power least? The Conservative party.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan: Closure has been used in the House of Commons 18 times, ten times by the Conservatives and eight times by the Liberals. Just imagine if they had been in power as long as us. They probably would have used it 100 times, if you went by the percentages.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Whelan: What a phony group, what a phony group! The hypocrisy of it! There must be a better word to describe them than that. There probably is in the other official language. I have been criticized for travelling around Canada. I am probably the most travelled Canadian, the most travelled parliamentarian. I have been in an elected position since I was 21 years of age. That will be 36 years I have been in an elected position, either on school boards, municipal councils or as a member of Parliament.

An hon. Member: That's 25 years too long.

Mr. Whelan: Why do I stay in the House of Commons?

Some hon. Members: Why?

Mr. Whelan: Mainly because of the democratic function that takes place. They re-elect me all the time and keep sending me back.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan: The other reason I run is because I have become so fearful of that group over there and what they would do to this country. Just imagine. When we go across the country and talk to Canadians or around the world and talk to other people, what do they say? You are from Canada, the people who are the best housed, the people that have the best way of life in the world, the highest standard of living, the highest standard of earning of any people in the world. There are more people living on the same plateau in Canada than any other country.

Canada is the envy of the world. I was recently in British Columbia, the Fraser Valley, Chilliwack, Abbotsford and other places. I visited farmers and other ordinary citizens of that area. The people there come from many different parts of the world, so we talked quite a bit about the constitution. They talked about Canada, because they are just ordinary people like their Minister of Agriculture. They told me that when they came to Canada, if anyone had told them they were going to a province named Alberta, Ontario or Quebec, they would not have known where they were going, though they knew they were going to Canada. They said they do not understand what is going on, they do not understand this debate. They told me