

The Constitution

that a mechanism has been found so that Quebec will become part *de facto*, as it has already been *de jure*, of Canada.

In recognizing the distinctive character of Quebec in the larger portrait of Canada, I am looking forward to an active participation. I was certainly very involved in the referendum and, as my hon. colleague knows, I was an Yvette, moved and actively concerned about maintaining Quebec in Canada. From that point of view I am delighted.

I have one concern which I wonder whether my colleague can answer for me. As we look at the linguistic duality, which I hope is the concept behind the Accord, I wonder whether he could advise me whether the linguistic protections will be promoted for the anglophones of Quebec and equally for the francophones *hors Québec*. This is one matter that is of concern in its many dimensions.

Mr. Garneau: Mr. Speaker, I think in all good faith that the intention was there, but I do not think that it is clearly indicated in the Accord. I wish, as I said in my speech, that the legal text would clarify those things.

I met with some English-speaking Quebecers during the week-end and they indicated that they were anxious about this. To avoid any confusion, the legal text should be very clear and precise so that the problems we think we are solving now will not create other sorts of problems in a few months when the judges of the Supreme Court will have to interpret the Bill. This is why I hope the legal text will be much clearer so that no confusion will exist.

● (1550)

Mrs. Finestone: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member and I am looking forward to reading the fine print as well. I bring to your attention, along with my colleague, the fact that the multicultural communities want to know if they are perceived as part of this distinctive characteristic of Quebec. Is that covered in "distinct society" as well as "distinctive character"?

Mr. Garneau: Mr. Speaker, I thought that the 1982 agreement on the Constitution recognized the multicultural aspect of Canada. It is in the body of the Constitution. I think it is well protected there.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to listen to a speech in this House that obviously comes from the heart, coupled with good thoughts from the mind as well. I would simply like to congratulate the Hon. Member for Laval-des-Rapides (Mr. Garneau) for what I think is a first rate speech.

The Hon. Member will know I am a Member from Calgary, Alberta. I sat many long hours on the Constitution Committee some years ago and recognized a kind of kindred spirit of feeling among the many minorities in this country, which is a magnificent and very large country.

The French speaking people in the Province of Quebec are in the majority within that province but a minority within

Canada. Many of us in western Canada, particularly from my province, feel that far too frequently we are viewed as a minority within the Canadian context, because we come from a province which is so far from the centre of Canada and sometimes there is a tendency to overlook and to forget.

I wanted to make that comment more than anything else but also to ask the Hon. Member if he or the Members from Quebec within his caucus have a sense of just how joyous and how pleased we are from that minority in the Province of Alberta with this undertaking. We think our joy is perhaps equal to that which the Member himself seems to feel. Is there any sense of that existing within his caucus about how pleased we are with this undertaking?

Mr. Garneau: I think it is a loaded question, Mr. Speaker. I would certainly agree and tell this House without any restriction, that in my caucus, and even my colleague, the Hon. Member for St. Henri—Westmount (Mr. Johnston), who expressed a certain reserve about the Accord, everybody agrees it is a good thing that Quebec is back in the Constitution. We understand that in 1982 a certain number of steps had been taken not only for Quebec but for other regions too.

We have to recognize that in 1982—and I note that the Hon. Member is from Calgary—the Constitution was amended and rewritten partly because of the question of natural resources. It was done at the request of the then Premier of Alberta, Mr. Lougheed. It is a symphony that must be adjusted all the time, *une symphonie inachevée*. Nobody will believe for a moment, when and if the Meech Lake Accord finds its way into legal text, that everyone in this House will vote for it. The task is not finished. We will have to adapt the Constitution to any new situation that may arise, from the environmental point of view defence, or for any other reason. I am sure this will have to be done all the time because the federal system is a living institution. It is like a pendulum that swings from one side to the other. Sometimes the pendulum swings to the provinces and sometimes it swings back to the central Government.

I concluded my speech by saying that this matter should not be based on partisan politics. I want to remind the House that Liberals and Conservatives have been on both sides of the issue since the beginning of Confederation. Sometimes, and for years, the Liberal Party has been the Party of the regions. Why was the problem of Manitoba considered solved? It was because Laurier decided to respect the power of the regions.

The change of attitude was made after the war. During those earlier years the Tories were representing the national policy. It was the idea of John A. Macdonald. Then things switched. The Liberals became more centralized and the Tories became more regionalized. This is not a Party matter. I am pleased and I understand that all regions of Canada will be pleased if we can find good legal wording for the Meech Lake Accord. I would not like to—