

*Government Orders*

I would be interested in hearing the hon. member's comments on that.

Finally, I would like to ask the hon. member his feeling about Section 41 of the Constitution of Canada where it says that:

An amendment to the Constitution of Canada in relation to the following matters may be made by proclamation issued by the Governor General under the Great Seal of Canada only where authorized by resolutions of the Senate and House of Commons and of the legislative assembly of each province:

In other words, for any amendment we would need unanimous consent. I will just direct my hon. friend to that section in the Constitution.

I was wondering and would really appreciate his comments in light of the First Ministers' conference in Ottawa in June which we witnessed. I would be interested to ask his comments about the need for unanimous consent by all the provinces in Canada. We saw it was disastrous and we are still going through the pain of the death throes of Meech Lake that we saw in June. I would like to understand his viewpoints on how the Prime Minister and the government of this country think that we would come up with unanimous consent again in light of Section 41 of the charter?

**Mr. Nystrom:** The first issue is a discussion paper, Mr. Speaker. I cannot speak for government members of the House. I assume they did not see the discussion paper either. It would be quite an insult to members of the opposition if it were shown to the government members and not the opposition members. I assume they did not see it, but how do I know?

In terms of Section 41 of the Constitution, there are three ways to amend our Constitution. That is one of the ways. That comes from the patriation of 1981. Section 41 says that in order to amend our Constitution for things like the office of the Queen, the Governor General, federal institutions, the use of the French and English languages, we need the unanimous consent of all the provinces and the federal Parliament which is the House of Commons and the Senate. This is one thing we should take a look at. We could have more flexibility in amending the Constitution.

I do not have any pat answers for that. It was spelled out back in 1981. I was a member of that committee. These were the important national institutions. It was important that Alberta, Saskatchewan or Quebec would

approve before we could change an important institution like the Supreme Court of Canada, or the monarchy, or the Governor General or the Senate. There is a real problem with that, but there are also some good arguments for it. Hopefully, we can look at some ways— whoever is on that committee—to make that a bit more flexible. I see that as one of the purposes of this committee being struck today.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gilles Rocheleau (Hull—Aylmer):** Mr. Speaker, I think that Quebec's political sovereignty is in the best interests of Quebec and of Canada. The purpose of this committee, again, is to create a diversion, it is an expedient.

I believe that Quebec's political sovereignty seems, unless of course Quebec would give up taking on its full distinct character and specificity—which would be unthinkable—the ultimate choice determined by history and strengthened by two irreconcilable visions of Canada. Quebec's political sovereignty has become the logical choice, in the best interests of Quebec and the rest of Canada, Mr. Speaker, because of the cleavage concerning Quebec's status within the Canadian Confederation. There is a lack of understanding about the very philosophy of the main constitutional changes to be considered. There is the systematic refusal from the English-speaking majority of Canada to recognize Quebec with special status and to give this province the necessary powers to promote and protect its specificity. There is, Mr. Speaker, the gradual weakening of Canada's provinces.

**An hon. member:** Come to the point!

**Mr. Rocheleau:** I recognize, Mr. Speaker, that some of my colleagues would like to object. I will simply refer to the Charest committee which was created last spring by this same government. I will remind you, Mr. Speaker of the Citizens' Forum which was established lately, again by the same government, by the Prime Minister, Mr. Mulroney. There is also, Mr. Speaker, the committee we want to create today. This is simply a device, Mr. Speaker, intended to create a diversion. It is an expedient on the part of the government and I think we cannot go on being part of Canada. It is just a matter of time, Mr. Speaker. We have to wait for the Bélanger-Campeau Commission to table its report at the end of March and we will see that Quebec wants to be the master of its own future, that it wants its sovereignty.