

"61. A reference to the *Constitution Act 1982*, or a reference to the *Constitution Acts 1867 to 1982*, shall be deemed to include a reference to any amendments thereto."

General

16. Nothing in section 2 of the *Constitution Act, 1867* affects section 25 or 27 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* or class 24 of section 91 of the *Constitution Act, 1867*.

CITATION

17. This amendment may be cited as the *Constitution Amendment, 1987*.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier: Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to the Minister's speech and, indeed, I share some of his views. We both belong to a minority in our provinces, although the minority in his province is more important than it is in mine. We are part of the Canadian diaspora and we understand each other very well, I think, in terms of our objectives.

I would like to ask him a question because, at the end of his remarks, he mentioned the possibility that, should there be a change of Government—and I mention it only because the Minister himself alluded to it—that Government, headed by someone other than Mr. Hatfield in New Brunswick, might not endorse the Constitutional Accord known as the Meech-Langevin Accord.

We all know that, at the present time, the amendment formula requires seven provinces with 50 per cent of the population, but that the Meech Lake Accord introduces a new formula which demands unanimous approval, and that is precisely what the Minister is concerned with. The new method will come into effect when the Accord is agreed upon. The provincial Premiers and the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) have agreed unanimously that this new formula should prevail. Yesterday, I was asked in the House the question I am going to put to the Minister. I do not know whether he read it or not. Would a new partner on the Canadian scene, a new provincial Government which would refuse to endorse the accord, this Meech Lake agreement, destroy the unanimity concept? In the Minister's opinion would such a move jeopardize an agreement accepted by a Government legally elected and rightfully representing the interests of the Province of New Brunswick? I am asking the question because, as far as I am concerned, I consider that a new player must accept the rules presented to him. Those of us who are in favour of the Meech Lake Accord, and I am sure that I am expressing the feelings of many of my Party colleagues, think it would be improper and perhaps even difficult for a new player to change the rules of the game and say: the Meech Lake Accord is no more, for there is no longer unanimity. We will return to the old amending formula which required the support of seven provinces and 50 per cent of the population. If I understood him correctly, is that what the Minister meant? He was concerned that a new player, New Brunswick, might change the rules of the game concerning the Meech Lake Accord.

Mr. Valcourt: Exactly, Madam Speaker. That is what is occurring now. There is, of course, the fact that the Leader of the Liberal Party of New Brunswick is involved in an election campaign and that, in an effort to obtain the support of both

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women and Acadians, he claims that he will, all by himself, reopen this dossier in spite of the fact that this document is the result of a consensus between all the First Ministers of this country. But what does he really mean? When he says, for instance, that he wants to improve this document or that he wants to meet the concerns of women, although constitutional experts have abundantly demonstrated that their rights would not be affected, although those who know something about Canadian reality are well aware that some provinces are resisting their constitutional obligations at home, he claims that he wants to promote the French fact and, in order to flatter Acadians, he says that he will reopen this dossier. But what he absolutely refuses to say, it is whether, if elected, he would submit the Constitutional Accord to the Legislative Assembly for approval. What I simply cannot accept, what I deplore, Madam Speaker, is for him to use the concerns of Acadians, women and Native peoples, saying: Of course, I am going to reopen this, but without saying openly that, once the issue is debated, no, it is out of the question, for it cannot be reopened. Are you going to submit it to the Legislative Assembly, yes or no? That is what he will not say. It is because he refuses to show leadership that I, for one, feel that we should not give him a blank cheque. I feel also that he is depriving the citizens of New Brunswick of one of the most basic tenets of democracy, namely, that they should know where their political leaders stand. Is he going to submit the 1987 Constitutional Accord for approval, just as the legitimate and duly elected prime minister of New Brunswick did on June 3 last?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) has the floor for a very short supplementary. Then I shall recognize the Hon. Member for Cowichan—Malahat—The Islands (Mr. Manly).

Mr. Gauthier: Madam Speaker, what the Minister has just put forward are facts! Each province has agreed to submit the 1987 Constitutional Accord to its Legislature. I do not see how it could do otherwise. Personally, I feel that the newly elected Premier of New Brunswick . . . I do not share the Minister's opinion on this, for I feel Mr. McKenna has very good chances of being elected—I think that Mr. McKenna will submit the Constitutional Resolution to the New Brunswick Legislature, and we will see what will happen next.

[English]

Mr. Manly: Madam Speaker, the Minister spoke as a francophone from outside Quebec. I think it was very important for him to do that because there are many related concerns.

The Minister is also the Minister of State for Indian Affairs and Northern Development and, as such, he has responsibility to aboriginal people. Could he give us his views on the impact of the Accord upon aboriginal people, particularly in respect of that section of the Accord which calls for constitutional conferences that will be dealing with such subjects as Senate