

and collectively must display this spirit of solidarity. In addition to the spirit of co-operation and solidarity, Canada requires from its citizens and non-citizens alike an attitude of intrinsic and extrinsic patriotism.

As the proud member of Parliament for Parkdale-High Park, Mr. Speaker, I should like to end my contribution to this historic debate by saluting, on behalf of my constituents, the Canadian flag in this chamber to your right, thus displaying my patriotism to Canada, a country which my parents adopted only 51 years ago.

[*Editor's Note: At this point Mr. Flis saluted the flag.*]

Mr. Flis: I pledge allegiance to this flag and to the country for which it stands—one country, one nation, indivisible for all.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Joe Reid (St. Catharines): Mr. Speaker, a short number of months ago I was one of those denied the opportunity of speaking and participating in the early rounds of this debate. This is a debate on a matter which touches the lives of so many Canadians; a debate in which, as the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) indicated when introducing the resolution, all members were invited to participate; a debate which involves a fundamental document of our nationhood, one which all of us say is intended not only to serve our needs of today but which must endure so as to serve the needs of the generations of our children of tomorrow.

It does not matter that my words are those of a backbencher, that they be repetitious or even immaterial; we as members of Parliament should not be denied the opportunity of expressing our own points of view, or those from the parts of the country from which we may come.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Reid (St. Catharines): This is why I welcome the opportunity of participating in this debate today. Already we have a document that is rigid in form and in substance. In spite of what my hon. friends may say as a result of the number of communications they may have received, such as the hon. member for Parkdale-High Park (Mr. Flis) whom I follow, the Prime Minister has indicated there will be no free vote on this resolution in this House.

I have noticed that the pages of *Hansard* have not been filled with joyous recounts by hon. members from the province of Quebec. Even at this late date, as I rise in support of the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Epp), I would remind those opposite that although this government is made up of members basically from one region, it is the Government of Canada that has a duty and a responsibility to all of the provinces and all the people within those provinces to act in the general interests of Canada. This makes it even more important for the government to be sensitive and to take some soundings of the wants, feelings and needs of that great part of this country from which this government has no representation.

The Constitution

Polls are not new to this government. Let us ask the members of this government to read the results of polls. Better still, they should listen to the opinion makers of that western area of ours, be they provincial legislators, members of the press or members of this House of Commons.

One often asks oneself why this government insists on brinkmanship. In those early months of 1980 I heard and applauded those members who went into the province of Quebec and talked about a renewed federalism. In my naiveté, perhaps as a new member, I really thought they were talking about a redraft of the Constitution, one which would right the wrongs of the past, bring justice where injustice prevailed and provide equity and equality for all Canadians, the key to which was still federalism, and the purpose of which was greater strength, harmony and unity for all Canadians. The substance of that charter of renewed federalism I thought would be the product of the deliberations of a constituent assembly of Canadians, that the preamble would be one recognizing the supremacy of God and the dignity and worth of our people, as well as the spelling out of a way of life as we would have it be.

What do we have? Certainly we have a better document than the one proposed some four months ago, but it is still a document of illegitimacy born out of political opportunism and political compromise rather than the high principles of self-help and consensus which wed the four colonies of British North America together in the first place, subsequently joined by each of the other provinces under terms and conditions negotiated and agreed upon. It is still a document of unilateralism, divisive in its nature and in its process. It is not a document that finds common ground of understanding between and among its partners to confederation, but one that will continue to antagonize and be an affront to the provinces. It is still a document that runs the perils of doubt and uncertainty, that flies in the face of public and popular opinion.

● (1600)

We all know that a document of this kind should stem from the people. It has to be an expression of their philosophy and of their willingness to be governed by an accepted statement of values and principles. How many times has it been said that a certain law is not worth the paper it is written on, or that the law is an ass? Such statements can only be made where those laws never did have, or have lost, the respect of the people. We have been told goodness knows how many times that we are the servants of the people and that what this government has forgotten is just that. As was so ably set out by my colleague, the hon. member for Provencher, laws and lawmakers must never just command, but rather in a democracy they must command respect not only for themselves but for what they are doing.

It is worth noting here from Table I to Appendix D of the joint committee's report that, of the opinions expressed concerning the proposed resolution as a whole, 18 groups and 54 individuals expressed themselves as being in favour of the