

It also reaffirms the role of New Brunswick's legislature and government to protect and promote the status, rights and privileges of these language communities.

The constitutional amendment proposed by the New Brunswick legislative assembly is the fruit of a number of years of constant effort by governments and the people of this province.

[*Translation*]

It is the direct consequence of the enactment of the act recognizing the two official linguistic communities in New Brunswick, better known as Bill 88 or the Equality Act, which was passed under the Hatfield government in July 1981.

Bill 88 is much more than a mere legal provision. For New Brunswick's Acadian community, Bill 88 was intended to respond to the legitimate aspirations of Acadian men and women as expressed at the Convention d'orientation nationale des Acadiens, held in 1979 in Edmundston, the principal town in my riding.

I participated in that convention, and the spirit that inspired it bore witness to the courage and determination to equip the Acadian community with the tools it needed for its cultural, linguistic and economic development. Important steps had already been taken at that time.

Former Premier Robichaud, now a senator, had embarked on major reforms, particularly the Official Languages Act and the equal opportunities for all programs. Under the leadership of his successor, Premier Hatfield, and his minister, Jean Maurice Simard, also a senator now, several further reforms were implemented, such as duality in the Department of Education, community centres, schools and so forth.

[*English*]

In the same vein as its predecessors who were the pioneers, Premier McKenna's government supported these reforms and committed itself, with the leaders of the Progressive Conservative and the New Democratic opposition parties to entrenching this recognition of equality in the Canadian Constitution. This was at-

### *Government Orders*

tempted in amendments to the Meech Lake accord of June 9, 1990 and in the Charlottetown agreement.

It should be made clear that at no time during this period and these negotiations did the province of New Brunswick, the provincial governments or the federal government waiver from the purpose of entrenching these principles.

[*Translation*]

I wish to refer especially to the efforts and indefatigable support of the Prime Minister, without whom passage of the resolution today would be far from certain. All official language minorities can count on the Prime Minister as a staunch friend, and I want to thank him personally on behalf of all New Brunswickers for his constant support and leadership on this issue.

[*English*]

For New Brunswick's anglophone community Bill 88 and the entrenchment of its main provisions in Canada's Constitution means a number of things.

First, it confirms almost inalienably the road that the two communities have taken together for many years now, the progress they have made together and the future they want to build together as partners, not opponents.

It testifies to an irreversible social maturity that wants to develop a common existence and pass on to future generations of New Brunswickers their desire to continue this social and economic experiment.

This resolution enables anglophone communities which are in a minority situation in some areas to take control of their own cultural and linguistic development in the field of education and other government services.

• (1020 )

In a community like Madawaska—Victoria, my riding, the main town, Edmonston, a small community of 12,000 people, has a population of only 4 per cent of anglophones. Because of the spirit in New Brunswick and because of that duality, these people have separate school boards in my home town, district 33. Therefore, this constitutional measure testifies to New Brunswick's generous and creative vision of Canada's future.