

Supply

created in sustainable development and environmentally friendly agricultural outlets.

The undersigned petitioners humbly pray and call on Parliament to maintain the present exemption on the excise portion of ethanol for a decade, allowing for a strong and self-sufficient ethanol industry in Canada.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Shall all questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS*[English]***SUPPLY****ALLOTTED DAY—NATIONAL UNITY**

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest) moved:

That this House strongly affirm and support the desire of Canadians to remain federally united as one people, committed to strengthening our economy, balancing the budgets of our governments, sustaining our social services, conserving our environment, preserving our cultural heritage and diversity, protecting our lives and property, further democratizing our institutions and decision making processes, affirming the equality and uniqueness of all our citizens and provinces, and building peaceful and productive relations with other peoples of the world.

● (1010)

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to this motion which addresses the issue of Canadian unity from a positive and federalist perspective.

The motion has two parts: an affirmation and a description. The first part simply calls for the House to strongly affirm and support the desire of Canadians to remain federally united as one people. Surely this is a proposition which every federalist in the House can and should support.

The second portion of the motion is a brief, shorthand description of what Reformers believe should be some of the distinguishing characteristics of that federal union as we move into the 21st century. It is a shorthand description of a new Canada which our members will expand on in the course of the debate.

Please note that there is nothing negative in the motion. The motion does not criticize the government so that government members cannot and should not regard it as a confidence motion. Nor does the motion contain any implicit threat to

Quebecers who for whatever reason may have given up on federalism.

The motion is simply a positive affirmation of the desire of the vast majority of Canadians to remain federally united and a shorthand description of some of the characteristics which can and should distinguish such a union in the future. The motion is worded generously enough and is of such positive intent that a majority of the members of the House can and should support it.

Why do we present the motion to the House? It is because we perceive a growing vacuum on the national unity issue, a leadership vacuum. If it is not filled with a positive vision of federalism and a reasoned response to the separatist challenge, the danger is that it will be filled with constitutional delusions and incomplete or inflammatory responses to the separatist challenge. That will harm Canada and every province and territory of Canada.

The past month has provided ample evidence of the existence of this vacuum and some of the delusions and inflammations which it encourages. It is said that nature abhors a vacuum and so should Parliament. Reformers offer this motion and a list of questions which we will be forwarding to the Prime Minister later this week as our contribution toward filling this vacuum with something more constructive and forward looking.

The Reform Party was originally created and is presently supported by discontented federalists.

[Translation]

We are discontented federalists.

[English]

We got our start in the west and have gradually increased our support across the country by appealing, for example, to people who are appalled at how the federal government spends money and accumulates debt. Our supporters are for the most part people who reject constitutional models or public policies based on alleged partnerships between racial and linguistic groups and who long for constitutional arrangements based on the equality of all citizens and provinces.

Our supporters are for the most part people who deplore the lack of effective, regional representation in Ottawa and the unwillingness of the traditional federal parties even to consider, let alone embrace, such democratic reforms as genuine free votes, citizens' referendums and initiatives or recall.

This is just a partial list of the dissatisfactions of Reform supporters and hundreds of thousands of Canadians with status quo federalism. We can therefore identify with other Canadians, including Quebecers, who have also become dissatisfied or disillusioned with that status quo federalism.

This brings me to the major point of difference between ourselves and the Bloc. Rather than reject federalism or the concept of a federal union of all Canadians, we are committed to reforming federalism and overcoming the systemic problems, chronic overspending, inequitable constitutional arrangements,