

The Constitution

It is not news to say that they distrust politicians, myself being excluded from that group. They wonder if we are listening. They are sceptical and are looking for action. They are concerned about the future of Canada. They do not want to see the country torn apart. They question the sincerity of the governments resolving the present problems.

They say that having more free votes in the House of Commons is a very popular initiative. For too long members have been seen as being Ottawa's representatives in the ridings, rather than being the ridings' representatives in Ottawa. I am told by many that this change will go a long way to improving people's confidence in elected members.

There is a feeling of alienation. People feel that even when they have their say it does not make a difference. They feel alienated from their own government and they feel alienated from other parts of Canada.

I can tell you that the people of Fraser Valley East are just like many other Canadians. They are tired of feeling left out. This is their country. They work hard and are proud of their contribution. They want to feel included in their country. Sometimes they feel, as do many other British Columbians, that being on the other side of the Rocky Mountains is like being in Siberia.

Like many Canadians, residents of Fraser Valley East want to be clearly represented in Parliament and they say more freedom from party discipline is an important first step toward that end.

The people of Fraser Valley East are concerned about what goes on in Canada. They are concerned for a united Canada, yet there are many national policies they question. They wonder about the official languages policy and multiculturalism. They question the approach being taken to resolve the issue of aboriginal rights. They see these policies in a negative light because they find them to be driving people apart rather than bringing them together. They see these policies as building walls instead of bridges. What they want to see is cohesion and a real sense of nationhood.

They do not want to see a broken Canada. They want to see a united Canada, where all individuals have the opportunity to go wherever they want in Canada and to be whatever they want. They want to see their government committed to fairness. The people of Fraser Valley

like other Canadians are very concerned about the future of Canada.

Because they have felt left out for such a long time, when my constituents read the 28 proposals they wondered why it seemed that there was so much for Quebec. Why are we left out? From where they stand, they see this as unfair and this gets their backs up.

The issue of the distinct society is a sore point to many. They acknowledge that Quebecers are different; they speak a different language and have a different culture. They say to me: "Fine, distinct in fact is one thing; distinct in law is another". From where they stand, they distrust the concept of distinct society. They are wary of too much power for the provinces. They see this as divisive and they see the concept of distinct society as contributing to further divisions.

Constituents of Fraser Valley East want to see a strong federal government that will work to keep Canada together. Until they see the historical background on how Canada was put together, there is that great question mark. All and all, people do not understand enough about Canada's history.

The people of Fraser Valley East want to see a strong united Canada. Many people have written to me over the seven years that I have been a member of Parliament and national unity has been a concern.

In recent years, the concern about the future of Canada has increased. I read the letters and listened to what people had to say and after they were done with airing their complaints they told me that they believe in this country and wonder why we are having so many problems when we have it so good.

My constituents say: "Look at other countries. We have so much going for us and we seem to have such problems just getting along with each other". The bottom line is that they do not want to see us throw away such a great country.

• (2100)

Rosedale is a small community in Fraser Valley East. The Canada Day committee, which normally organizes festivities on Canada Day, got together and went over the 28 proposals. The chairman, Fred Brian, and the secretary, Mary Sash, worked with 16 other concerned citizens of Rosedale to come up with a comprehensive brief that they submitted to the Minister Responsible for