

*The Constitution*

**Mr. Kristiansen:** That is a fairly accurate description of the Canadian prairies or it certainly seemed that way to our people when they first arrived in that part of the country. I am also afraid that if these last three days are any example it will begin to characterize the description of the debate we will have on the constitution, as might be gathered even at this early stage.

**Mr. Knowles:** Don't put the idea in anybody's head.

**Mr. Kristiansen:** It reminds me of a saying which is often used with regard to strikes, that it does not take much talent to get one started, but it sometimes takes a great deal of wisdom to put an end to one with honour and justice. It is not enough that we write something in stone. For all the importance that a constitution, or in another sphere a contract, may have in its wording and its distribution of benefits and powers, the key thing must be leadership and the willingness of all the parties to live together.

The important thing when we put together the constitution is that it be done in such a way that we can live together in balance. There must be something in it for everybody or everybody loses. It is the same in a marriage; people are entitled to their own space, and that space must be recognized. There must be something of value in the constitution for all the major parties.

In conclusion, I would simply say that while there may be many important concerns and differences in addition to the obvious difference we have over the matter of resources and provincial rights, this is not the time to let those other differences stop us from doing what we must. We must rise above those differences and demonstrate a faith in ourselves as a maturing nation to deal with all these remaining issues in our own time, in our own way in Canada and as Canadians. That is what the process in which we are engaged should be all about, and we in this party believe this is what it is all about. We are willing to play our part and recognize the limitations of our role.

We should have a constitution that is made in Canada. We should have a constitution and a structure in which all Canadians from all areas and all regions can work together and live together to produce what should be in this world of ours the greatest and most wonderful quality of life imaginable anywhere on this planet. Again, that is how we see it and we are prepared to move. We hope that others are as well.

**Mr. Roy MacLaren (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, 113 years ago, with the British North America Act, the people of Canada engaged in an act both of rejection and of affirmation. It was an act of rejection in the sense that we rejected the "Manifest Destiny" which some saw as our future, to be annexed to the United States. But much more important, as an affirmation of our commitment to an equal partnership between our two founding races, Canadians acted at that time to create a political structure that would accommodate the interests of the two founding peoples. Today we are engaged in

another stage of that evolution, that of providing political unity without racial, cultural or linguistic conformity.

We are no melting pot. We are committed to a nation in which two founding races can live in equal partnership. However, that equal partnership has been variously interpreted at different times and places in our country's history, creating confusion and frustration. The most recent manifestations of course are the Quebec referendum and the regional preoccupations which mark much of our country today.

Those various interpretations of how we must achieve our political unity have brought practical problems impairing our collective ability to deal with our difficulties. But that commitment to equal partnership has never wavered in all who believe that confederation will be judged a failure if we cannot assure all our citizens full opportunity in either the French or English language and in their own culture. The time has come to place that commitment in a Canadian constitution. In the past, as our country expanded west and east, as industrialization advanced and brought a changing role for governments, as social programs were advanced, amendments to the British North America Act were successfully made.

● (2200)

However, in the absence of an amending formula, that process of evolution, that process of constitutional change, of relying upon amendments to the act of another parliament, has become increasingly cumbersome, increasingly laborious and increasingly anachronistic.

As Senator Forsey said recently, this idea of unanimous consent of the provinces was voted down twice by the House of Commons, in 1869 and in 1871, and that was by a House of Commons which contained a number of fathers of confederation, all of whom voted against the idea of unanimous consent of the provinces.

Against that background, the time has clearly come to patriate our constitution.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

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## PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD—GRAIN—INVESTIGATION INTO  
UPGRADING—VALUE RECEIVED BY WESTERN FARMERS

**Mr. Bill McKnight (Kindersley-Lloydminster):** Mr. Speaker, in the last session on May 29, I asked the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board if he could inform the House and the farmers of western Canada whether he had