

The Constitution

not all NDP members support the government. I commend them for that and for speaking out for their constituents.

We have heard a great deal about the intense emotions involved in this question and we have been accused of using scare tactics and inciting, when all we are trying to do is gain the attention of this government.

I think everyone recognizes that the premier of my province is a very conservative individual, a quiet man who goes out of his way not to overstate a case. As a matter of fact, I think the premiers of western Canada have gone out of their way to understate the feelings and strong concerns of the people of western Canada. In an interview, Premier Blakeney was asked:

How do you sense the mood of the country now and how dangerous is this continuing acrimony, do you think, in terms of national unity?

He replied:

Well, I think the mood of the country is building into a confrontational mood.

● (2350)

Later on in the interview Mr. Blakeney said:

—we have a situation which is beginning to be more than disquieting. In fact, it begins to be dangerous.

The question was then put to him as follows:

Dangerous to the continuous existence of Canada as we know it now?

The answer given by Mr. Blakeney was:

Yes, I mean dangerous to the continuous existence of Canada. I don't want to overstate that—

Referring to the constitutional talks this summer, later in the interview, Mr. Blakeney said this:

With respect to the agreement of the package there was a rough and ready agreement by the premiers on all of the items in the constitutional package—

I ask hon. members what does this tell us? It tells us that there was agreement among ten provinces. But who could not agree? The federal government could not agree, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Trudeau could not agree. The "incredible sulk" could not agree. He wanted to sulk and go away in his corner so that he could write his own constitution. The premiers did not break up that conference, The federal government did.

There is more to what has been said about the problems in western Canada. I noticed the hon. member for Restigouche was reading from a newspaper. Now I would like to read an article written by Mr. Stan Roberts, ex-Liberal MLA for the province of Manitoba, who is presently executive director of Canada West Foundation. He said:

Trudeau was acting tonight as though he was president of a unitary state.

Now you know why he is an ex-Liberal MLA for Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. The article continues:

Ottawa's initiative can do nothing but increase separatist's sympathies in the west, he warned. This will fan the flames. It's like pouring a little of our well-known Alberta crude on the fire.

But the hon. member for Restigouche took great pride in reading a letter which appeared in a newspaper in Ottawa, supposedly written by someone in Alberta. I have a letter which appeared in the *Edmonton Journal* which was written

by someone from Penticton, British Columbia. I think some of my NDP colleagues would be interested in it. The letter reads:

A great destiny awaits Western Canada if it severs the Gordian knot but unless we do rise to the occasion we will forever remain central Canada's milch cow, forever under its political and economic control, eventually, perhaps, to be ruled by Emperor Trudeau in a totalitarian state.

If we search through the newspapers, Mr. Speaker, I am sure that we could all find letters to editors stating some of the views that we have put forth.

I say to members opposite, and to the Government of Canada, that we are trying to make you understand. We are trying to have you help us. We want your help. We want you people to help us, as I tried to make clear in my own way when I stood in this House and asked the people of Quebec to stay in this country because we wanted them. We wanted them then and we want them now. We want to stay with them as Canadians. But, Mr. Speaker, we need your help and the help of members opposite. I stood in this House and condemned a long-time friend because he is leading a unionist party of Canada that has, as its goal, the breakup of Canada. I did not enjoy condemning a friend. I know how the people of Quebec felt when they had to condemn friends. But I will stand in this House and condemn the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and his party if they break up Canada because I hope that some day my daughters and sons will be able to come to this House of Commons and have the opportunity to represent their part of Canada in a nation of Canada as we know it, and as we continue to want it.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, as I enter this debate tonight on this motion, I think back to the part of Canada where I was born. I remember the old people saying that some day in Canada we would have a flag. They also said that some day our constitution would be patriated to Canada.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Whelan: Some day it will be brought to its rightful home. Needless to say I never thought that I would be part of the institution that would debate the flag issue. I can remember that debate. Mr. Speaker, we used closure then. I can remember some of the people on the other side of the House crying.

Mr. Dick: After five weeks.

Mr. Whelan: I remember the wild stories of what was going to happen to this country of ours. I was part of that decision and I was proud. I am proud every day that I walk by the House of Commons and see Canada's flag flying on top of the peace tower.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan: I will be just as proud that I am part of bringing the constitution to its rightful home in Ottawa. Some of us have travelled around the world. We are the big helpers