

The Constitution

ground. They represent English, German, French, Chinese, Japanese, Greek, Italian and Ukrainian stock. Many of them are new Canadians who came here seeking freedom. Others are senior citizens and war veterans. They will always remember that the first time they heard their new member of Parliament speak on their behalf in the Parliament of Canada, it was under a motion to muzzle the debate on the future of their country.

Vancouver Centre is the very heart of Vancouver. Our riding is often termed "Lotus Land" in honour of our lifestyle. In China, where I was born, I remember the lotus as eternally serene, warmed by the sun and blessed by the rain—like our riding—rising out of the muddied waters. Mr. Speaker, at the moment we in lotus land are finding that the waters are very muddied indeed.

We have a Liberal government which is proposing to diminish the power of the provinces and increase the powers of the federal government in the national interest. But this government cannot represent the national interest, Mr. Speaker. It has no elected representatives west of the Red River Valley. It is, as *The Globe and Mail* describes it, a regional federal government which is using extraordinary powers to stop the elected representatives of Canada debating the future of Canada.

We have a Liberal government that spent \$6 million of our money on television advertisements urging us to bring the constitution home to Canada. But that same government this week voted against the Conservative motion to bring the constitution home.

We have a Liberal government which is urging us, in the national interest, to have a "made-in-Canada" constitution. But that same government is going to Westminster to ask the British parliament to make changes in our constitution that nine of our ten provinces do not want.

We have a government which is imposing on us, unilaterally, changes in the way that we govern ourselves. They call it a people's package, yet this very same package obscures the human rights of women, of natives and of minority groups.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, because I am speaking under gag rule, we have a government whose Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) invites us all to speak on a matter concerning the future of our country, and who then invokes closure. When this government brought in closure, only three members of Parliament from the province of British Columbia had been granted an opportunity to articulate the concerns of British Columbia. That is the federal regional government's concept of free and open debate.

You can see why, Mr. Speaker, from the viewpoint of lotus land, Vancouver Centre, the waters are very turgid indeed, and they have been further silted by the actions of the NDP. The NDP is taking credit for proposed amendments to the constitution which would give us less than we already have. The NDP considers this progress.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1950)

Miss Carney: The leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent) is claiming a victory in the area of natural resources. Let me remind hon. members what the government House leader in the other place, Senator Ray Perrault, describes as victory by the New Democratic Party. Referring to the letter from the leader of the liberal democratic party to his House leader on the opposition benches, Senator Perrault says:

It is a reconfirmation. It is a restatement of a right which is already enjoyed by the provinces.

Reconfirmation. Restatement. In fact, it is not even that. I would ask the hon. member for Oshawa, if he owned a gold mine, would he willingly exchange that ownership for the right to manage it? Or, if he owned the rights to an oil well, would he willingly exchange his certificate of ownership for a licence to control its use?

The NDP have managed to give away an ace card for a low card. In fact the NDP have dealt themselves out of the game and they might as well cash in their chips on this debate because they have lost their credibility with the country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss Carney: The liberal democrats have joined forces to force changes which will completely alter the nature of Canadian confederation. Among these changes will be the establishment of second class status for British Columbia.

Let me establish for the record how that secondary status will apply. In the amending formula proposed by the Liberals, any changes to the constitution must have the approval of 80 per cent of the population. And any change must be approved by a province that has, at the time the new constitution is proclaimed, a population of at least 25 per cent of Canada as a whole. Ontario has 35 per cent of the population. Quebec, whose population is declining, has 26.5 per cent. But British Columbia has only 10 per cent to 11 per cent. That means Quebec and Ontario can always veto a change in the rules. But B.C. will never have equal rights, nor will any western provinces, nor will the Atlantic provinces. The right to set the terms of our confederation will lie forever more with central Canada, and central Canada only.

Our problem here, Mr. Speaker, is that there are two prevailing views of the national interest. In the west we have historically viewed our country as a nation from sea to sea to northern sea. But hon. members across the floor of this House have consistently defined the country in terms of their own self-interest. They have defined Canada as being the equivalent of central Canada. We, in the west, have never accepted this limited role of Canada. Our concept encompasses the west and the north and the Atlantic provinces. And only when the interests of the regions can be satisfied can we honestly say in this House that we have met the test of the national interest.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!