

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. The usual courtesy was extended to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) and the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent). It should now be granted to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chrétien).

Mr. Chrétien: If the Vancouver formula is so good, what about all the flaws which the Leader of the NDP spoke about earlier? It is a kind of checkerboard formula for a constitution in Canada. If it is so good, let us have the premiers agree to it and make their recommendations to us. If the federal Parliament does not like it, who will decide? It will be the people of Canada who will decide.

● (1620)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chrétien: I am not embarrassed by that. I do think that sometimes our priorities as national politicians cannot and should not be the priorities of the premiers, because we have different jurisdictions. If you are a premier it is natural that you defend what you think are your local interests, but we national politicians sometimes have to become the arbitrators of the different aspirations to make sure that the wealth of Canada will be shared, and to make sure that the citizens of Canada will have the same rights.

Mr. Clark: Except the right to speak in Parliament.

Mr. Chrétien: That is our national responsibility, and if we have a fundamental disagreement about the amending formula, the people of Canada will decide what is wrong with it. I have confidence in the people of Canada. We are going into committee. We have tried to make our resolution the best possible.

Mr. Clark: Ha!

Mr. Chrétien: Yes. I have been listening to the speeches of hon. members opposite for weeks. None of the hon. members opposite has spoken about the charter of rights.

Mr. Crombie: Oh!

Mr. Chrétien: Yes, the hon. member asked a question about it. I told him to come to the committee. I did not listen to the hon. member's speech. I am sorry, but we are going to the committee, and we will reply to those questions. The hon. member raised a question about the possibility of not having affirmative actions, and in our charter of rights there is the possibility of affirmative actions, so this problem does not exist. It is good that the hon. member raised the question. It was a valid question, but it is in committee that we can deal with it, so let us go to committee. That is the whole point.

Why do we have this diversion today? Now hon. members opposite will get up and say that we did not debate the constitution today. We have debated it for days and days. In order to waste time there was question of privilege after question of privilege. Some took a whole day, rather than

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debate. Those subjects were not created by us. They were just raised to gain time. We are going to the committee. We will listen to hon. members there.

Mr. Clark: Then you will cut it off by closure there too.

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, the people of Canada want us to make up our minds. They are absolutely fed up with debate.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chrétien: The people of Canada want to know where hon. members opposite stand.

Mr. Clark: I stand for having the constitution home today.

Mr. Chrétien: They do not want the double-barrelled type of standing that we are for and against at the same time. Hon. members opposite should make up their minds.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chrétien: We know where we are going. I think that this tactic of diversion this afternoon will be voted down.

Mr. Clark: You are going to Westminster to hide out.

Mr. Chrétien: We will vote to go to committee. We hope to have a decision by the end of the year, and by some time next year we will have a Canadian constitution which at last will have broken the deadlock forever.

Mr. Clark: You won't have a country next year.

Mr. Chrétien: We will have a Canadian constitution which will be amended in Canada, with a bill of rights which gives a guarantee to all Canadians that the rights they have acquired—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chrétien: —will be those of all Canadians, that Canada is a country which could become mature and endow itself with the institutions it needs, a country which would be able to amend its constitution in Canada—

Mr. Clark: For amendments, it is necessary to go to London!

Mr. Chrétien: Since we must go there anyway, we might as well go. We want a charter of rights. Because it is the only legal way we can get one just now, that is the way we will proceed, Mr. Speaker. We have committed ourselves to changes, decided that we wanted a Canadian constitution, that we needed to enshrine the linguistic rights of Canadians in the constitution, as well as both official languages—

Mr. Clark: In England?