

In 1867 the Fathers of Confederation gathered in Charlottetown to witness a major constitutional event. Thanks to the good will of all regions of Canada their agreement prevailed until 1982, but the 1982 agreement turned out to be incomplete.

Today, June 3, 1987, ten Provincial Premiers representing four different political Parties have agreed on a historic definition of Canada. It is a consensus with history, with geography, with the economy, with our cultures, and with our various ethnic communities. Today, Mr. Speaker, we pay tribute to the architect of this event, to Canada's statesman, the Right Hon. the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney).

* * *

THE CONSTITUTION

QUEBEC'S PARTICIPATION—CONGRATULATIONS TO ARCHITECTS OF ACCORD

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, as Quebecers and Canadians I think we can rejoice in the constitutional accord which paved the way for Quebec's endorsing of the Canadian Constitution last evening or this morning.

And like everyone else, I should think, I extend my congratulations to the Premier of Quebec, the Hon. Robert Bourassa, and to Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Rémi-lard who, since the 1985 elections, has been criss-crossing the country in an attempt to convince the other Provincial Premiers that Quebec should be urged to join the Constitution.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I also congratulate the Provincial Premiers who at last have come to appreciate the Canadian reality.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Malépart: Mr. Speaker, I also want to congratulate the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Turner) for being the first leader in Canada to demonstrate open-mindedness with respect to Quebec's participation in the Canadian Constitution.

* * *

THE CONSTITUTION

SIGNIFICANCE OF CONSTITUTIONAL ACCORD

Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Argenteuil—Papineau): Mr. Speaker, today the most important amendment since the patriation of our Constitution was signed.

S. O. 21

Mr. Speaker, in concrete terms this means that Quebec has returned to the Canadian constitutional fold and that our Government has kept its promise to make Canada a united country, where the rights of English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians are respected.

For Quebec, it means that the province will be able to select and receive its own immigrants; to propose nominations for senators from Quebec; to propose nominations for the three judges representing one third of the Supreme Court; and to promote and protect the French character of that province, in addition to obtaining a non-derogation clause with respect to language rights.

Mr. Speaker, for the first time in our history, the right to financial compensation for opting out has been enshrined in the Constitution. A great victory for the provinces.

Mr. Speaker, today is a great day. It is the first day of a united and strong Canada, open to all and attuned to the needs of Canadians. A unique Canada in the image of its Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney).

Mr. Speaker, no more confrontation and arrogance. Make way for positive action and a modern, united and generous Canada.

* * *

• (1415)

[English]

CHALLENGE '87

SEED PROGRAM—CATHOLIC YOUTH ORGANIZATION'S APPLICATION DENIED

Ms. Sheila Cops (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I am outraged to learn that the application of the Catholic Youth Organization to the Challenge '87 SEED program has been denied.

The CYO depends upon student summer employment programs to provide one-on-one programs for exceptional children whose disability prevents them from taking part in regular camping activities. This is the only summer outlet for exceptional children, particularly those with social and emotional disabilities and severe learning problems.

More than 100 disabled children will miss out on summer camp this year because of the Mulroney Government's decision to cut off funding to the CYO.

Indeed it is truly a sad day for Canada when the Conservative Government wants to reduce the deficit on the backs of disabled children. How quickly Rick Hansen's struggle is forgotten.