

Metis and Inuit, to protect the minorities, racial, religious and otherwise, and then, because of your mortality, one day you died or you left office, retired or were defeated. Suppose you were succeeded by somebody who would not necessarily subscribe to your humanitarian view of life; someone who may be more ruthlessly pragmatic about things. What would happen to your legislation then if left to the whim of the majority of that particular day?

That is the kind of reason why I insist and I believe very strongly, with everything that is in me, that the constitution must embody a charter of rights. I do not mean that we should not be able to get at it. This document has a provision to amend so we will be able to get at it in a way that requires due thought, and that requires proper, sober judgment. We will not be able to react to the political whim of the moment or to what appears to be politically popular at a particular time. Of course we must have entrenchment. It is appalling that so many voices are raised against entrenchment.

Last night I was invited by my Tory friends opposite to say a few words about Premier Peckford. I shall be glad to oblige. The Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador is a man whom I know very well. He is a personal friend of 15 years. Indeed, the only job he ever had other than that of a politician, is one which I gave to him. When I was principal of a high school he was the head of my English department. As young care-free bachelors we tripped around the globe together and we exchanged views on many subjects, including especially the subject of politics. I found that he and I share many of the same hopes and aspirations for our people in Newfoundland and Labrador.

● (1550)

Hon. members will understand, therefore, something of the sadness, the crushing disappointment and the jolting shock which I experienced a few weeks ago at the first ministers' conference here in Ottawa when I heard the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador utter these words, which I quote from a direct transcript of the proceedings: "The Prime Minister and Mr. Lévesque articulated two different visions of Canada." The Premier of Newfoundland said: "I would have to side with the one advocated by Mr. Lévesque."

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Simmons: As a Newfoundlander and as a Canadian, these have to be the saddest words I have ever heard. We all know what Mr. Lévesque's view of Canada is. If there is one single aspect of the constitutional dialogue which is absolutely crystal clear in the minds of Canadians, it is Mr. Lévesque's view of Canada; what he would like Canada to become. The kindest statement of the Lévesque position—and I put it this way so it doesn't appear as though what Mr. Peckford said was taken out of context—is that he believes in sovereignty-association. He believes that Canada ought to consist of a number—be it one, two or ten, it does not matter to Mr. Lévesque—independent electoral units, states or provinces, call them what you will, which would be a free association, one

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with the other, for certain reasons of trade and monetary policy. That is the Lévesque view. That, I am sad to reflect, is the view of Canada which Mr. Peckford has said publicly he favours.

I want to tell him, and I tell him in sadness, not in anger and not to score political points, that that is not the view shared by the overwhelming majority of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Simmons: There is no part of this federation which has a more positive view of the federal role than does Newfoundland, and with very good reason. We have been benefactors for 31 years of the amazing wealth of this country. The very prospect of offshore oil and gas off Newfoundland's coast is today a real live prospect, a real live possibility, because and only because of the tax policies of this federal government concerning frontier exploration.

Do hon. members realize the hundreds of millions of dollars of federal tax revenues which have made these discoveries possible? Do hon. members realize that the Newfoundland offshore development would today be nothing more than a pipe dream, nothing short of wishful thinking, were it not for the tax policies of this particular government and our involvement in the matter? Now that this government's policies have ensured that Newfoundland's economic prospects will be better than anybody ever dreamed of, it saddens me to hear those at the provincial government level in Newfoundland wanting to rewrite history, and dishonestly parading the impression that somehow the offshore development is something for which they are responsible.

I have digressed, Mr. Speaker. I was talking a moment ago about Mr. Peckford. Let me tell you, sir, that his heart is in the right place. His immediate agenda for leading our province toward greater prosperity and cultural fulfilment is misguided. I tell him the Lévesque route is a road to disaster. Premier Peckford, I am sad to say, is the victim of some very bad, unwitting advice from the pen and the lips of a few who actually share his dream and share my dream for Newfoundland and for Labrador but who lack the know-how to achieve it. They believe sincerely in their exasperation just like a twelve-year-old boy who by running away from home believes he can somehow solve his problems.

I am a Newfoundlander—

An hon. Member: Not very loyal.

Mr. Simmons:—I am a Canadian, and not necessarily in that particular order. Please do not ask me to choose between the two. I was not born a Canadian, but I am proud to say that I have been one for the past 31 years since 1949 when Canada had the good wisdom to join Newfoundland!

We, in Newfoundland and Labrador, did not vote in 1949 to forfeit our freedom but rather to expand it and to give it some meaning. How free are you when your sons and daughters had to leave their homeland to go to what was a foreign country—