

The Constitution

backbenchers who are elected by the people of Canada to govern wisely the affairs of the nation.

Canada's democratic government is far stronger when we have constructive criticism from the two opposition parties. One of those two parties has given this Parliament positive criticism. The other party, unfortunately, has stooped to an all-time low in attempting to bring disunity to this country. I draw hon. members' attention to the householder of the hon. member for Okanagan-Similkameen (Mr. King) and to this letter from the hon. member for Richmond-South Delta (Mr. Siddon). I wish to make it clear that I have high respect for both of these gentlemen and that in no way am I attacking their personal character. What I am objecting to is their actions which turn one Canadian against another.

I draw the attention of hon. members to the cover of this householder, paid for by Canadian dollars and sent to everyone in that constituency: "Are you ready for second-class citizenship?" To suggest that bringing home our Constitution with a charter of rights will somehow make some Canadians second-class citizens is unparliamentary.

I have also a letter from the hon. member for Richmond-South Delta, a very friendly letter addressed "My dear Jesse" and signed, "Yours very truly, Tom". I quote:

A country can only be constituted by a bringing together of individuals and regions, in a spirit of good will.

Let us see some of that spirit of good will from the official opposition, because to date we have not seen it.

Otherwise the constitution and possibly the country is doomed to failure.

It is this doom and gloom which is demoralizing our country. I draw attention to the last page of the *Householder*, supposedly a letter from a constituent in Okanagan-Similkameen:

Mr. Prime Minister:

I am a Canadian, as loyal and dedicated as you. Do not offend me by questioning my devotion to my country. Do not offend me by taking me for granted.

Let me read from the letter attached to the one received from the hon. member for Richmond-South Delta:

I am a loyal and dedicated Canadian. Do not offend me by questioning my devotion to my country. Do not offend me by taking me for granted.

If the official opposition is receiving thousands and thousands of letters from constituents objecting to the charter of rights, may I ask why they keep using one and the same letter? The Prime Minister's office as of today has received approximately 6,000 letters concerning the Constitution. Out of that number, 600 to 700 have dealt with the charter of rights. They have been mainly in support and involve other issues, such as property ownership and including a reference to God in the preamble. These are the things to which people have been addressing themselves.

An interesting sidenote, Mr. Speaker: last year the Prime Minister's office received approximately 10,000 letters concerning the seal hunt issue alone, showing that the proposed Constitution is not causing as much concern as the official opposition and the premiers of the provinces would lead us to

believe. I give credit where credit is due and I give negative criticism where negative criticism is due.

I am somewhat disappointed with all three parties represented in this House, with the special joint committee on the Constitution, with the Senate and with Canadians in general. All the discussions, recommendations, petitions, and debates that we have heard on the topic of a new Constitution for Canada have been offered in a spirit of individual, group and regional interests. The whole process in arriving at a proposed resolution to be presented to Her Majesty the Queen respecting the Constitution of Canada has been a very selfish one.

● (1550)

Will Canada guarantee my democratic rights, my mobility rights, my legal rights, my rights of equality, my linguistic rights or my cultural rights? Will the new Canadian Constitution guarantee my fundamental freedoms of conscience, religion, thought, belief, opinion, expression or peaceful assembly and association? The answer to all the above questions is yes.

Not one Liberal, Conservative or NDP member, no premier and no Canadian has asked the question: What can I do for Canada? What is my obligation as a Canadian citizen to my country? What are my responsibilities to my great nation? How am I showing my patriotism and allegiance to my country? Is it my duty to defend Canada in time of war?

An hon. Member: Yes.

Mr. Flis: Therefore, I see a very important element missing from the proposed constitutional resolution before us. The package before us is a one-way, selfish ticket. It clearly states what the Constitution will offer Canadians, individually and collectively, but the new proposed Constitution, moulded by Canadians, does not entrench Canadian citizens' obligations, duties, allegiances and responsibilities to their country.

I recommend, therefore, that on this historic occasion this House entrench a preamble to our Constitution. Such a preamble should include, among other things, the obligations, duties, responsibilities and allegiance of every Canadian citizen to his or her country, Canada. The principles we stand for as Canadians should be stated eloquently and in a style that can be committed to the hearts and memories of generations of Canadians. The preamble should be one of the most significant parts of the Constitution and could serve to educate the young as to their obligations to their country.

What is lacking in this country today is what the people in Poland have just rediscovered; the strength, the power and the force of solidarity—"Solidarnosc", as they say in my heritage language. One week ago today, Mr. Speaker, a member of the solidarity union of Poland sat in your chair, unknown to you. As he sat in that chair I explained to him how our Parliament functions. He sat there with tears in his eyes and said, "God, this is freedom!"

We need solidarity in this House during this debate. The various levels of government must practise solidarity in sharing the wealth and poverty of this land. Canadians individually