

Government Orders

There is a convention which I expect would be followed. It is that the court will inform the Chair officially of what has transpired. I do not anticipate receiving that this morning or maybe not even for some days.

The other matter referred to is the question of an appeal. I am not in a position, nor I suppose are hon. colleagues, to know whether an appeal would be taken. I think we should look carefully at that.

Again, we do not know what is likely to transpire at the sentencing or what arguments may be used by the defence at that time, all of which would affect whatever action this place might ultimately take.

• (1010)

We had a matter like this some years ago. Hon. members will remember that I took the matter under advisement to consider my position and to consider what was appropriate under the circumstances. As it turned out, the matter was resolved without the necessity of the Chair having to make any ruling at all.

However, the hon. member for Kamloops has, as he said, brought this matter to the attention of the House at the first possible opportunity. If I understood him correctly, he is not suggesting that the House should take any sudden action today, but when it is appropriate under all the circumstances.

I will take the application of the hon. member under advisement. As soon as I am in a position to advise the House further I shall do so.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

THE CONSTITUTION

NEW BRUNSWICK CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT PROPOSAL

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration) moved:

WHEREAS section 43 of the Constitution Act, 1982 provides that an amendment to the Constitution of Canada may be made by proclamation issued by the Governor General under the Great Seal of Canada where so authorized by resolutions of the Senate and

House of Commons and of the legislative assembly of each province to which the amendment applies;

NOW THEREFORE the House of Commons resolves that an amendment to the Constitution of Canada be authorized to be made by proclamation issued by His Excellency the Governor General under the Great Seal of Canada in accordance with the schedule hereto.

SCHEDULE

AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF CANADA

1. The Constitution Act, 1982 is amended by adding thereto, immediately after section 16 thereof, the following section:

"16.1 (1) The English linguistic community and the French linguistic community in New Brunswick have equality of status and equal rights and privileges, including the right to distinct educational institutions and such distinct cultural institutions as are necessary for the preservation and promotion of those communities.

(2) The role of the legislature and government of New Brunswick to preserve and promote the status, rights and privileges referred to in subsection (1) is affirmed."

2. This amendment may be cited as the Constitution Amendment, year of proclamation (New Brunswick).

He said: Madame Speaker, in the parliamentary life of any politician, there are moments that have special significance and remain engraved on our hearts for a long time. Today is one of those moments.

From the time of our earliest forebears and during the relentless efforts of past generations to carve out a place in this difficult landscape, to create a safe home for their language and culture, our country—which is more than a mere territory—has been a crucible in which was forged a historic reconciliation of two languages and cultures.

[English]

We are witnesses today to the culmination of a long historical development which is also the beginning of a new journey for the English and French linguistic communities of New Brunswick and indeed of Canada. Today is one of those history-making moments for New Brunswick's two official language communities.

The constitutional resolution we are proposing to pass today will entrench in Canada's Constitution the main provisions of an act recognizing the two official linguistic communities in New Brunswick.

This constitutional amendment recognizes the principle of equal status, equal rights and equal privileges for these two language communities. In particular, it recognizes the right to the separate educational and cultural institutions that are necessary for their protection and promotion.