

Government Orders

problem, as we did after the 1980 referendum, and be put to sleep again. We have come this far and the failure of Meech provided the motivation the people of Quebec needed to decide to take their destiny in their own hands, without the help of any committee. Such committees are nothing but a masquerade in democracy, when, in fact, the answer is very simple: two sovereign nations with a monetary union.

[*English*]

Ms. Campbell (Vancouver Centre): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is, of course, entitled to his own view which he expresses in the House with considerable force. I am not sure that he speaks for all Quebecers when he makes that statement.

The important point is to have a process that allows people, not simply to express their views, but to begin to develop and formulate their views. That is why, as part of the process for establishing this joint committee of the House and Senate, the government has tabled a discussion document which sets out the history of constitutional amendment in the country and poses some of the possible options that members may wish to consider as a starting point, as opposed to an answer.

The joint House-Senate committee to examine the amending process of the Constitution is complementary to what has become known as the Spicer committee, the Citizen's Forum. The Citizen's Forum is designed to ask Canadians to have a dialogue with one another about what kind of country they want and the role of the official members of the commission is to gather those insights, to stimulate the discussion, and then to bring to the Government of Canada, and also to this House, a report on the state of the nation.

It is a unique and very valuable process that involves all Canadians and not simply the traditional elites who have, for most of our history, monopolized the discussion of constitutional change. I think the process is important.

I would take exception with the implications that the hon. member stated because I come from a province that did support the Meech Lake Accord. I strongly supported the Meech Lake Accord and I supported it when I was a member of the provincial legislature in British Columbia, before I had any conception whatsoever that I

would be foolish enough to subject myself to the amount of travel required to come to Ottawa.

I have a passionate commitment to the survival of the country and to the respect for the rights of Quebecers and their ability to find their place in the sun. I am deeply hopeful that it will be possible in this country to find a process of constitutional change and a process of accommodation that will enable us to protect that existence.

• (1550)

Frankly, I believe that the wonders and beauties of my province, British Columbia, are part of the patrimony of every young Quebecer and I would say that anyone who wished to deny young Quebecers that patrimony is going to have to answer them very strongly.

Therefore I believe that this process will contribute to the efforts of many Canadians to preserve what we believe is something quite extraordinary in the context of the countries of the world and to preserve it in a way that all Canadians will be able to fulfil themselves and be true to themselves. This is a very important step in that direction.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, this government motion to set up a special joint committee to examine the formula for amendment to the Constitution is, I am afraid to say, just another desperate, cynical move by the Prime Minister to correct somehow all the damage done by the failure of the Meech Accord. That failure, I might say, resulted from the stubborn inflexibility of the federal government and the government of Quebec.

The core provisions of the Meech Accord could have been saved if the Prime Minister had acted sooner in dealing with the proposed amendments, especially the proposals of the Charest committee report.

But, no, the Prime Minister and the government ignored all attempts to amend the Meech Accord. They kept rolling the dice and waited until the eleventh hour until that date when the Premier of New Brunswick, Premier McKenna, made proposals for a companion resolution in an attempt to break the deadlock that had developed with respect to the Meech Accord. It was an attempt by the Premier of New Brunswick to have the best part of the Meech Accord, the core provisions, go through.