

*The Constitution*

order a general election. Had the Italian constitution allowed the King of Italy these powers, the world might have been spared the fascist regime of Mussolini. It should be voted that in all countries of the former British Empire in which the monarchy has been replaced with some other head of state, countries such as South Africa, India, Pakistan, Ghana, Nigeria—and I ask: Is Canada the next?—there has been a steady decline in freedom from arbitrary government, in the application of due process of law and in respect for the Constitution.

I remind you, Mr. Speaker, that the people under these regimes enjoy markedly less security, both psychologically and materially. I say this in all sincerity, since I was brought up to understand that when I uttered the prayer "God save the Queen" I was, in fact, asking God to help us govern ourselves better. Yet we find today not only reference to the Crown being minimized in Canada but even reference to God being struck from the proposed Constitution by the socialists. I am not one to run and stare at the Royal Family, but I am a Canadian who knows from experience how delicate and precious our freedom is. I know from history how it is earned and how easily it is lost through apathy and indifference. I say to colleagues and fellow citizens: please, let us understand the safeguards which underlie the foundation of our freedom before we carelessly toss it all away.

On the other hand, I must say that the structure of the British parliamentary system has failed us and other former members of the Commonwealth because it represents centres of population. It does not carry the checks and balances necessary for less populated regions to feel and remain a part of the whole. Bangladesh is a recent example of this. The same is also happening in Canada today.

In Canada, Parliament is controlled by the province of Quebec with its 75 seats in this House, and the swing power is in the province of Ontario. The rest of us in the outback regions of this land have the feeling that we really do not matter. The successful strategy of the Liberal Party is to play to the Latin vote in Canada. In every federal election, the Liberal Party starts with 100 Liberal seats out of 282. The other regions, races and ideologies within the country, struggle to overcome that handicap.

To new Canadians who came to this country to participate in its freedom, its opportunities, its welfare benefits and its historical adherence to the principle of private property, I say: beware, new Canadians, of the propaganda to which you are being subjected. If you doubt that this resolution on the Constitution is nothing more than a vehicle to socialize this once proud country, just look at the National Energy Policy which plays one region against another, nationalizes industries under the guise of Canadianization, and has yet to address the problem of oil self-sufficiency within the land.

In my opinion, we in this country are dangerously close to one-party rule. The arrogant audacity of this resolution tells us that we are a frustrated and confused people; we are alienated, when we once had a great sense of nationhood; we are now divided, and our sense of nationalism has been deliberately removed from us over the last 15 years. We are being told that

there is racial antagonism in the land; we are changing our form of government without full comprehension of what is ahead; and we are dangerously regionalized. Surely within these issues lies the challenge which must be resolved if, once again, we are to become a strong federal nation.

Our parliamentary structure serves only the population centres, for that is where political power is rooted. We understand that. Our Senate is not structured, or used, to give regional balance. Therein lies one of our failures. Of course, I disagree with the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) who wants to abolish the Senate. One of the problems we have in the provinces is that there is not a balance between the regions and the elected assembly which represents or gives power to the population centres. Instead of fooling around with a document of political revolution, which this resolution is, we should be addressing the faults in our structure which are causing the degree of regionalism from which we suffer today. The party caucus system locks behind closed doors the great interregional debates from which understanding and consensus flow. Those great debates in search of consensus are not part of the House of Commons. They are not part of the Canadian awareness at large. Instead, they are buried in the dangerous game of backroom regional party politics.

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All three parties are experiencing the tension and strain of this dilemma, for one of the aspects of political power in Canada is caucus solidarity. But if we are really and truly representing the ideals, wants and emotions of our regions, how can we have total solidarity in caucus? That is one of our dilemmas.

Members from Ontario know that the politics of their region is to support the Liberal government because the people in Ontario have been sold a bill of goods which says that their sharing means that the resources of the outback, the west, must be available at half the world prices.

Meanwhile, a customs union forces every Canadian, no matter where he or she lives, to pay 130 per cent to 160 per cent of world price for all capital and consumer goods to protect the industries and the payrolls at the centre and heart of the country. We in the west simply do not see that as being fair or even falling within the ambit of fair sharing. It is raw power politics which causes intense regionalism.

The vast majority of people in the west are not being bamboozled by twisted rhetoric and Machiavellian strategies. These regional tensions and views would be out in the open if the Senate was an elected Senate and if it represented the regions on an equal basis, with full powers to veto abused power from this House of Commons.

The caucus system of achieving consensus has been under debate for centuries. In my opinion, the caucus system fails the minority regions of the country.

In search for an answer to this problem, I have ventured to suggest that we must work federally from a four-region concept. The other day I noticed that the NDP wanted to work