

We as a civilized society have suddenly and collectively recognized that fundamental human rights exist and are inalienable. As a nation and as a people, we wish to enshrine them now in our most fundamental law, our Constitution; enshrined in our Constitution as a symbol of our brotherhood and forever as a restraining hand against collectivized discriminatory action, particularly those of governments in our pluralistic society. These rights are not given by government. They are recognized to exist, so we enshrine them here. That is a great leap toward freedom.

It is governments which set the tone of discrimination as evidenced by many examples, such as discrimination against Japanese peoples during the Second World War and restriction of peoples with Austrian-Hungarian passports during the first great war, many of whom were my ancestors who came to this country 20 years before that time.

Therefore, I support fully and with great exhilaration the entrenchment of a charter of rights and freedoms in the Canadian Constitution. The argument that somehow it is colonial or inappropriate to ask for and effect such entrenchment in the British parliament, when we have effected some 21 amendments using a similar process, does not overwhelm me. I—and I am sure most Canadians—would be honoured to have Britain do it for us. I would think it would be an act of great honour and privilege for British parliamentarians. What finer final gift could Britain give the Canadian pluralistic society than the entrenchment of such a charter!

In my view it would cement for all time a friendship, a kinship, a bond, between mother country and its offspring which has grown to manhood. What greater final gift could we Canadians receive from Britain, that wonderful society where parliamentary democracy was incubated and blossomed, that gave the world a true understanding of collective and individual freedom!

The British Parliament would be acting without precedent and committing irreparable harm to Canadian-British relations if it attempted to resist, or delay, or modify, or reject the entrenchment of the charter of rights and freedoms before patriation of the Canadian Constitution. Such action would result in a form of Commonwealth impeachment and would downgrade the lofty esteem of the monarchy, particularly so in the eyes of the ethnic community. I, for one, would regret it immensely.

The people of Canada, through the hearings of the joint parliamentary committee, through past massive petitions and through the electoral process, have demonstrated positively that they want fundamental rights entrenched in the Constitution, irrespective of what some provincial premiers contend.

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All ten premiers on two occasions, in 1977 and 1978, unanimously agreed to extend bilingual educational rights to all provinces where numbers so warrant. Therefore, such agreement supports entrenchment in the Constitution. I want to say that six of the premiers at those conferences were Progressive Conservatives.

The Constitution

The extension of duality promotes and enhances our diversity. Oneness would accelerate homogenization and rapidly destroy our diversity, as it has with our neighbour to the south. The melting pot process would prevail with oneness. Multiculturalism lives because duality is alive. It is duality which promotes and enhances our diversity.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Yurko: Bilingualism kindles the desire for, and extension of, multiculturalism. It is the very essence of bilingualism and multiculturalism which provides diversity and gives us an exciting national fabric that makes for a new nationhood, even though some ferment must be endured. The very technology which has propelled the English language to the forefront in world commerce, communication and near-universality, is now giving way to a new universal language. It is the language of electrons and optics, a language which at the push of a button can instantly translate signals into any and all languages and thus preserve, enhance and propagate many languages and cultures. Technology which began as a mass homogenizing process of languages and cultures has now become the salvation of all languages and cultures. Canada being so advanced in technology is the very first world nation which is using and will, use technology to create a multilingual and multicultural society. It is unity and diversity in practice that we are witnessing in Canada at this very time.

The charter is not perfect, but it is a significant step forward, matching the action of all other federations formed since 1867. I would like to have included in the preamble a reference to God and family and the worth of the individual. However, I am distressed over accusations in the debate in regard to the inclusion of a reference to God in the Constitution. My belief in God is secure; it does not need to be enshrined in secular documents. It is now enshrined in the greatest of all constitutions—the Good Book. I wholeheartedly accept its inclusion in the Diefenbaker Bill of Rights and I would be delighted to see God enshrined in the preamble to the Constitution. What distresses me is the postulate that somehow we on this side are somehow more godly than members on the other side of the House, or that they are more godly than we, or that one person here in his or her judgment is somehow more godly than someone else in this House. Time will bring forth a constitutional preamble and God will be in it, if He so wills it to be.

I would also like to see the right to own property in the resolution. But this will come eventually with provincial consent. To force it into the Constitution now over provincial objections would be a massive interference into provincial powers and it would surely provide the provinces with sufficient additional ammunition to perhaps defeat the resolution in Britain. It would certainly enhance their case. If anything, the resolution should have in it a provincial property ownership opting-in clause for provinces. In 1972, we essentially enacted the Diefenbaker Bill of Rights containing the right to own property into the first law of Alberta. I can vouch for the fact that our experience has shown that it is not overly difficult to