

*The Constitution*

programs with this kind of wording but they would be marginally more difficult. I think we should clarify the wording so that we have national programs with the same standards across the country. If not, you run the danger of having a much better program in Ontario, which is wealthy, than in Newfoundland, which is poor. We could have a much better program in British Columbia or Alberta if the western economy picks up again than we have, for example, in New Brunswick or Prince Edward Island because they are much smaller and much poorer. I appeal to the Prime Minister to try to get an agreement to entrench wording which would protect the national interest.

I want to comment on the creation of new provinces. This is one part of the Agreement I do not agree with at all. I do not know why the rules should be different for the creation of new provinces in the Northwest Territories or Yukon than they were when Saskatchewan, Alberta and other provinces were created. In the past there was an agreement between the province concerned and the federal Government. The province came into the federation, and that was it. If the First Ministers are not willing to continue with that as a fall back, as my Leader said today, we certainly accept the existing amending formula where seven provinces representing 50 per cent of the population and the Parliament of Canada have to agree. In that way one or two provinces cannot veto Yukon becoming a province. I am not sure if Mr. Vander Zalm, for example, would agree to Yukon becoming a province. I think the existing amending formula would be much fairer for Yukon. I once again appeal to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice (Mr. Hnatyshyn) to look very seriously at that idea.

I am also concerned about the unanimity rule as it concerns national institutions, and I am particularly concerned when it comes to the Senate. I recognize the special problems of Quebec with respect to protecting the French language and culture. However, I am concerned about whether or not we have created a bit of a strait-jacket here for Senate reform. Under the present rules, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Alberta get six Senators, but New Brunswick and Nova Scotia get 10 apiece. We are now going to have a system where the Premiers recommend potential Senators and the federal Government must pick someone from the list acceptable to it. I am not sure whether Richard Hatfield or another Premier of New Brunswick, or the Premier of Nova Scotia, want to give up that power and that number of Senators. I am just not sure those Premiers would be more interested in doing that now than they were three or four weeks ago. I am not sure whether David Peterson of Ontario would like to give up this new-found power of recommending 20 or 24 people as Senators. If that does not happen there will be great discrimination because Saskatchewan and British Columbia have only six Senators each while Ontario and Quebec have 20 or 24 apiece. That is a major problem.

• (1740)

I know other Members would like to say a few words before six o'clock. I will, therefore, conclude by saying that we have,

in general, a good agreement in principle. I am concerned about a number of the details, particularly the spending power. I am concerned about the amending formula as it pertains to the creation of new provinces. I am very concerned that the Indian people did not have more rights enshrined in the Constitution. I appeal to the Premier of my province, the Premiers of the other provinces, and the Prime Minister of Canada to do whatever they can to make this a better deal for the country.

I agree that we have a tremendous future and a great country. When we fully patriate the Constitution of Canada we can start working on some of the very serious economic problems, patriate the economy of Canada, and create an economy within which we can wipe out poverty for every Canadian.

**Mr. Allmand:** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague, the Member for Yorkton—Melville (Mr. Nystrom), referred to the position taken by our friend from Saint-Henri—Westmount. He said that he believed that position was outdated in 1987. I agree with that statement. As a neighbour of my good friend from Saint-Henri—Westmount I must say that in my opinion he has exaggerated the possible negative interpretations of the Accord. In any case, I think he was premature in his remarks.

When the Liberal Party passed its resolution in November of 1986 it said that a preamble should be added to the Constitution of Canada to recognize the linguistic duality of Canada and the distinctive character of Quebec as the principal but not exclusive source of the French language and culture of Canada. It seems to me that that is not too far from what we have in the Accord. As we have all said, we will want to see the final wording.

I know my friend has a deep interest in the rights of minorities and he has already referred to native people. Section (1) of the Accord states that:

The Constitution of Canada shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with

a) the recognition that the existence of French-speaking Canada, centred in but not limited to Quebec, and English-speaking Canada, concentrated outside Quebec but also present in Quebec, constitutes a fundamental characteristic of Canada;

Section (2) says:

Parliament and the provincial legislatures—are committed to preserving the fundamental characteristics of Canada—

Would the Hon. Member not agree with me that that provides adequate protection to the linguistic minorities of the country? It appears to me that it does, and I am one who voted against the agreement in 1982. What is the Hon. Member's opinion on that?

**Mr. Nystrom:** Mr. Speaker, I think there is adequate protection for the linguistic minorities. There is reference in the constitutional agreement in the first section with regard to the distinct society, "the recognition that the existence of French-speaking Canada, centred in but not limited to Quebec, and English-speaking Canada, concentrated outside Quebec but also present in Quebec". It also refers to the role