

people of Canada. I am sure the committee will not be allowed to travel to hear the views of the native people and others in various parts of the country. That is what really upsets members on this side.

Listening to members opposite—and I think I can say this because I am from Ontario—what disturbs me most is how little they understand about the feeling in western Canada. I have spoken with my hon. friends here who are from western Canada and I think I am a fair judge of their character, sincerity and honesty, and I do not think I have ever seen so much emotion from members as I have seen from the members of our caucus who come from western Canada. They are really concerned and upset.

This summer I travelled twice to western Canada and I spoke with the people there. I sensed the feeling of frustration. And when members stand up and talk about separatism in the west, I believe them. I believe the forces are gathering out there and if we fail to listen to them it will be a tragedy.

I see from an article in the newspaper tonight that the Prime Minister is threatening further closure on this debate so that he can meet his deadline.

A few months ago the province of Quebec was engaged in a referendum. Members opposite came to us and asked for our support. They asked us to go into Quebec with them. The Leader of the Opposition went into Quebec and appeared on a platform with the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chrétien). Other members of our party also went into Quebec to speak for the No forces. The chief government whip came to me, as whip for our party, time and time again and said to me: I have so-and-so who wants to go into Quebec to campaign for the No forces, could we have a "pair" for him? And I know he will tell you that we co-operated. I told him we would give him a "pair" any time any member opposite was going into Quebec to speak for the No forces. We kept our word every time.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kempling: What we are asking here today, and what we have been asking for in this debate is that we be afforded the same courtesy.

There is a serious situation in western Canada. I really do not think members of the government party understand how serious it is. We are asking for time to continue this debate. We are asking for time to get out to the people in western Canada and speak to them. We are asking for time for the committee to travel across the country. We are asking, in all sincerity, that the committee be allowed to travel so we can test the depth of the concern in western Canada and let those people be heard before we make the final changes in the constitution. That is all we are really asking, sir.

● (0050)

Let me conclude by saying that in a democracy constitutions come up from the people, not down from the government. Today, that process, by the imposition of closure has been stopped. Therefore, I cannot support the motion that is before the House at this time.

The Constitution

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair recognizes the hon. member for Kitchener (Mr. Lang), but would like to bring it to the attention of the House that at this time, according to the provisions of Standing Order 33, no members will be recognized after one o'clock. Any member recognized prior to that time has the usual time limit.

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, during the remarks by the hon. member for Burlington (Mr. Kempling), who indicated his concern that there would be limits placed upon the debate after the matter came out of committee, the government House leader called across the floor and said, "There is no limit". That is to say there would be no limit on debate in this House of Commons after the matter came out of committee. Obviously, that is of real importance. Would the government House leader rise and give us a categorical assurance that there would be no limit upon the opportunity of the House of Commons to debate this matter after the report of the committee.

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): That isn't a point of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: If the government House leader wishes to rise on the point of order, the Chair will recognize him, but the Chair has recognized the hon. member for Kitchener (Mr. Lang).

Mr. Pinard: Mr. Speaker, the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition has a very learned House leader, and I am sure that he can learn a lot from him about the rules of the House of Commons.

Mr. Peter Lang (Kitchener): Mr. Speaker, as a new member of Parliament I feel very privileged to participate in this debate and to have the opportunity to share with hon. members of this House some of the thoughts and views I feel are germane to this discussion on the constitution. In order to acquaint myself with many of the constitutional issues that are now before us, I have had to conduct myself for the past few months not unlike a student who is cramming for an important exam.

In the process though, I have run across some insights which I think would be useful to this debate. One in particular stands out in my mind. It reads and I quote:

I confess that I do not entirely approve of this constitution at present, but sir, I am not sure I shall never approve of it, for, having lived long, I have experienced many instances of being obliged, by better information or fuller consideration, to change opinions even on important subjects, which I once thought right, but found to be otherwise. It is therefore that, the older I grow, the more apt I am to doubt my own judgment of others.

Nevertheless, I doubt whether any other convention we can obtain may be able to make a better constitution; for, when you assemble a number of men, to have the advantage of their joint wisdom, you inevitably assemble with those men all their prejudices, their passions, their errors of opinion, their local interests, and their selfish views. From such an assembly can a perfect production be expected?

It therefore astonishes me, sir, to find this system approaching so near to perfection as it does; and I think it will astonish our enemies, who are waiting with confidence to hear that our counsels are confounded like those of the builders of Babel, and that our states are on the point of separation, only to meet hereafter for the purpose of cutting one another's throats. Thus I consent, sir, to