

The Constitution

work of the Lower House. The Senate would retain the power to amend any Bill with the provision for the House of Commons to override any amendment or veto that the Senate proposed. Finally, this Triple E Senate would have double majority veto on language matters.

The recommendations of that report were unanimously endorsed by the Alberta Legislature in May, 1985. On March 10 of this year, the Alberta Legislature unanimously registered its support for the concept of a Triple E Senate.

Triple E Senate reform holds great attraction for a number of political leaders in the west. As Hon. Members are aware, Premier Getty is a strong advocate of the Triple E proposal. In his April 5 speech to the Alberta Progressive Conservative Party Convention, he declared that Canada "can only grow in a healthy way if our regional representation is fair and balanced". Following the Meech Lake meeting, Premier Getty repeated that he will be pushing for a Triple E Senate. The former Premier of Alberta, Mr. Lougheed, has also come out in support of this idea.

As we proceed seriously to consider Senate reform, we will need to answer some difficult questions, such as what the powers of the reformed House should be, its relationship to the House of Commons, and its effect on the powers of provincial Governments. In this regard, the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) recently injected a judicious note of caution. Speaking in Camrose, Alberta, on April 25, he wisely pointed out that many questions "have to be considered very carefully as we proceed with Senate reform because you cannot change one institution in isolation from the rest". He also said: "We want changes that make Canada work better. That requires both commitment and care". This is the approach, as the Secretary of State for External Affairs affirmed, with which the Government will address the undeniable need for Senate reform.

● (1640)

In closing, I want to repeat what the Prime Minister said in this House on May 1, and I quote:

The Meech Lake agreement is good for Canada and good for Canadians. It will unblock the Constitutional reform process and enable Canadians to turn their attention to other issues such as Senate reform and fisheries.

The tabling and proclamation of this agreement will conclude the first round of Constitutional renewal. Senate reform will be at the top of the agenda for the second round. Let us applaud what has been accomplished. Let us look forward to further reform aimed at strengthening Canada. Is it really too un-Canadian to rejoice and celebrate this day of national renewal?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kempling): There being no questions or comments, we will resume debate.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): In 1982, Mr. Speaker, I was a Minister in the Trudeau Government at the glorious

time of the patriation of our Constitution. This major achievement has contributed to the enhancement of Canada, and I still feel very proud of what we accomplished then. But as others have indicated, it was to a very large extent an incomplete symphony.

[*English*]

At the time of great rejoicing in 1982 when the Constitution was brought back, we were unable to secure the approval of the Province of Quebec to the constitutional package. The issue was tested in court and it was held that the repatriation was effective nonetheless, that it was binding in all parts of Canada, including within the Province of Quebec. However, a legalistic approach cannot be the beginning and end of a story like that. There is more to it than simply legally concluding that repatriation had been achieved.

I approach this debate, as does my Party, on the premise that it is extremely important that the approval of the Government of the Province of Quebec be achieved for the Constitution of Canada. That is not because it is legally required but because otherwise constitutional growth, national identity, and a sense of Canadianism are adversely affected.

I would like to give some specific examples and show how very important it is that the Meech Lake initiative advance and succeed, although I will suggest some areas in which I hope there will be changes. First, those critics of Canada, not only within the Province of Quebec but elsewhere, can use the fact that Quebec has never approved of the Constitution to attack Canadian identity and Canadian nationality. Separatists can say that this is not a freely arrived at Constitution, gladly and serenely accepted by all the people of Canada, that it is less than that. That type of criticism can be damaging to our country.

There is also the difficulty of achieving further constitutional evolution. We can talk about reforming the Senate, about establishing Indian self-government and about any change, any development in the Constitution such as bringing in new provinces. None of these measures which are on the Constitutional agenda for the future, the changing of powers, the reform of some of our federal institutions, can be achieved well without Quebec's participation.

It is interesting to note the ironic fact that without Quebec's participation in the Constitution, my own Province of Ontario has a veto. How satisfactory is it to the rest of Canada that one province has a veto when provincial constitutional conferences are held and amendments are proposed? The reason is that to approve an amendment under the present Constitution, seven provinces covering 50 per cent of the population have to agree. If all of the other provinces which attend such a conference agree and Ontario disagrees, the amendment cannot be adopted. Therefore, this unfinished business is not simply a matter of an elegant repatriation of a Constitution. It is not simply a wish or hope that the Constitution be accepted and understood in all parts of the country. It is a serious constitutional defect that Quebec not be part of it, and for all of our