

The Canadian Constitution

[English]

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, this is something of a lesson for me, learning about the constitution and its problems. I am hesitant to ask the Prime Minister a question, but I will do so and possibly display my ignorance on the subject.

Assuming the patriation of the constitution and assuming continued difficulties on unanimity for an amending formula, does the Prime Minister envisage that there could be certain individual matters on which there would be unanimity for an addition to, deletion from, or amendment of some sort of the British North America Act after patriation? An obvious example is that there may well be unanimity now on an amendment to the act on the entrenchment of language rights or the Bill of Rights. Does the Prime Minister envisage that being possible? Does he envisage canvassing both houses of parliament and the provinces to make some of those amendments, one at a time, to the legislation after patriation, while we are waiting for agreement on an amending formula?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, this is the course which has been followed by this country for the past 110 years. We have taken subjects one by one, and in some cases unilaterally, in some cases acted with unanimity, and in other cases acted as a result of an agreement between the federal government and one or two provinces when only one or two provinces were concerned. The hon. member is really suggesting that we continue "waiting for Godot." This may indeed be what we will have to do. This has been the course in the past 109 or 110 years. It is one which I, of course, would be foolish to reject. What we are attempting

to do, however, is to be able to reach agreement on the basic technique, one which will permit us to pursue the course suggested by the hon. member, but without having to make the pilgrimage to Westminster each time we reach some kind of agreement.

Mr. Speaker: For the final question, I recognize the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles).

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, this is more of a point of order than a question of substance. Is it clear that the material to be appended to today's *Hansard* includes the letters which the Prime Minister wrote to the premiers, and the draft proclamation?

Mr. Trudeau: Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is the substance of the letters that I tabled. If the House so wills, I think it would be advantageous to have the whole material appended to *Hansard*.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: I take it from that response it is safe to assume the House has given its unanimous consent to the suggestion of the Prime Minister that the material be tabled and that it be printed as an appendix to today's *Hansard*.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): All of it.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, all documents tabled by the Prime Minister.

It being five o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 2 p.m. on Monday.

At 5 p.m. the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.