

### *The Constitution*

hand, unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly . . . but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God." What we are dealing with in constitutional change is not paper or things, it is human lives.

Some time ago I was checking through the library to find the derivation of the word "Canada". According to the information I received, Canada derived from the Huron-Iroquois word "Kanata" which means a village or community. Canada is much more than a village. Canada is much more than a land mass consisting of the northern half of the North American continent. Canada is the people that inhabit this great land mass from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean and from the Arctic Ocean to the Great Lakes. Canada is the attitude and aspirations of all these people. This Canada of ours is being divided by the way the Prime Minister is trying to shove this resolution through this House and ram his ideas down our throats to pursue his timetable.

● (2030)

I would like to quote from an article in *The Citizen*, it being a paper that does not always follow Conservative policies. More often than not it is quite favourably disposed to the present government and the present Prime Minister. I would like to quote from a column written by Iain Hunter, dateline Vancouver, and published on February 20, 1981.

Prime Minister Trudeau admitted Thursday he is dividing Canadians by pushing through his constitutional reforms.

He's not sorry about it, he declared—in some cases he finds it "exhilarating."

Trudeau told more than 200 cheering Liberal supporters here that if the country breaks apart in five or 50 years because of his unilateral action to patriate the Constitution with an entrenched charter of rights and his own amending formula "then I say it wasn't worthy of living another day".

**Some hon. Members: Shame!**

**Mr. Gass:** Shame, indeed. When I read those lines I tried to figure out what type of a man is leading this country, a man who can stand and say he is exhilarated when he is dividing our country.

A constitution should be a source of pride and a unifying influence within a political community. A constitution should be and can be, if the federal government will realize its folly and come to its senses, a symbol of our society's democracy and an object of national pride for each and every Canadian.

**Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!**

**Mr. Neil Young (Beaches):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to join in this historic debate on the proposed Constitution and the charter of rights for Canadians.

Since I came here, following the 1980 election campaign, there have been very few matters come before this House which have demanded that we set aside our partisan political views in favour of the importance of the country. In my view, this matter presents one of those few occasions. It is a matter of such importance to the future of our country that it rises above partisan politics, and it should be debated in that light.

Throughout the past year the New Democratic Party has taken an approach to this debate which, in my view, has been both conciliatory and co-operative. As a Canadian I am proud

of that fact. As a member of the New Democratic Party I am also proud of the role my leader has played in this debate on constitutional reform. I am also proud of our party's two members who served on the joint committee, the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom) and the hon. member for Burnaby (Mr. Robinson). They both worked extremely long and hard on this much-improved constitutional package.

**Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!**

**Mr. Young:** I believe the approach taken by the New Democratic Party has been a constructive one. I also believe there are a growing number of Canadians who would agree with me on this question. However, I also recognize that this debate has been an emotional one, as indeed it should be. It is difficult not to be emotional when, for the first time, we are debating a document which demands that we define what we think of ourselves as Canadians.

As Members of Parliament, we are being asked to set a course for Canada which will finally bring us to adulthood; which will finally bring us to full independence as a sovereign nation state.

I am particularly pleased to have been given the opportunity to be a member of this House when this debate is taking place. Like most members of the House there are many areas of this constitutional package that I could speak to. However, in the time I have available to me I want to address the proposed charter of rights.

During the course of this debate I have heard some people say that a charter of rights is unnecessary for Canadians. To those people I say they are wrong to hold that particular view. Even a shallow look at where we have been in our country, and where we are at now in the area of civil and human rights in all parts of Canada, would show that there is a need for such legislation. I would ask those who question this need to remember how Japanese Canadians were treated during World War II and the shame we feel now about that period in our history. I would ask them to cast their thoughts back to October 16, 1970, when the Government of Canada subjected the people of Canada to the first peacetime invocation of the War Measures Act. With a single stroke the government placed in suspended animation many of the hard-won liberties of the Canadian people.

I also ask those who question this need to look at what a number of provincial governments have done, or have attempted to do, from time to time. For example, the Alberta government at one time tried to strangle those who did not agree with it by passing anti-free press legislation. In the mid-1960s the Ontario government introduced a bill which, if it had been made law, would have drastically expanded the powers of the police in that province. Only public awareness and pressure prevented the government from actually carrying out its intentions. There was also the infamous padlock law in Quebec.

Consider the discrimination that is practised every day against women in our society, against our ethnic population, our aboriginal peoples and disabled and handicapped Canadians. One does not have to try very hard to recognize the need