

distribution of powers between governments, predicated on the freedom and well-being of citizens”.

Surely, Mr. Speaker, even the members of the Bloc Québécois cannot be against the freedom and well-being of citizens. I should hope not.

Mr. Speaker, there is nothing sacred about the way powers are now distributed. Over and above that fundamental and general principle, we must also keep in mind a number of objectives which are peculiar to Canada and which ought to guide us all on the road to constitutional renewal, particularly when re-examining the distribution of powers between the two levels of government. Specifically: (1) any change in the distribution of powers should guarantee the rights and freedoms of citizens; (2) any change in the distribution of powers should ensure that the two main linguistic communities in this country are maintained and strengthened. The very existence of Canada rests on that basic principle, and it must be generously endorsed by all government levels in Canada.

In addition, Quebec must be recognized as the principal focal point of French life and culture in Canada. Any change in the distribution of power should guarantee the respect for and growth of Native people, promote the rights and growth of cultural communities, endeavour to maximize the quality of life and standard of living of all Canadians, ensure the proper working of the Canadian economic unions, ensure, on a national scale the pursuit of social justice through the sharing of resources between regions and citizens, ensure sovereignty for every government within its respective jurisdiction, take into account the diversity of various regions and their own dynamism, including the distinct character of Quebec society—

**Mr. Plamondon:** Go and say that to Chrétien and you will see!

**Mrs. Copps:** I am sorry, but the hon. member certainly did not listen to the submission to the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, because this is part of Mr. Chrétien's statement. So why do you not shut up and listen for once!

Mr. Speaker, I continue: Leave to the provinces responsibility for what is not required by the national interest or the best interest of citizens.

Finally, the streamlining of Canadian federalism is not necessarily an affirmation of the principle of total symmetry in every aspect of our constitutional federa-

tion. Canadian federalism has always been and continues to be flexible enough to accommodate the asymmetry of some situations.

Mr. Speaker, that is the reason why we propose an extended amendment to the NDP's motion, because we think, as a party, that it will be important to strengthen such regions as the Atlantic, Western and Northern Canada, so that they may have a greater impact on the drafting of national legislation.

At any rate, this is only the beginning of the constitutional discussions.

[English]

To answer the constitutional challenges we need a real Canada round. This round should be aimed at rebuilding the whole country. The task is enormous but it is not impossible.

I see that I am getting close to the hour of one o'clock. Rather than beginning what I feel to be a very important part of the process, I would like to seek the unanimous consent of the House, if I might, to continue my remarks.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois):** Is there unanimous consent of the House for the motion of the acting leader?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois):** It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock later this day.

The House took recess at 1 p.m.

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#### AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

#### STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[English]

#### GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I stand today to congratulate and commend the competition bureau's recent decision to look into retail gasoline prices in the national capital region and various areas across Canada.