

*The Constitution*

by our offices both here in Ottawa and in Regina have been by and large letters from constituents saying get on with the job, we have much more important things to do such as the economy. Yet I cannot help but think that now the importance of the Constitution has come before our constituents they have felt as I do that indeed the Constitution must be addressed. Without a resolve to solve the constitutional crisis we will not have an opportunity to have a Canadian economy.

Before I go into my summation of what the constituents have said to me thus far, I would first of all like to thank the constituents particularly for their patience.

Regina—Wascana is indeed a true test of one's intellect when comparing that with the constituents' because I probably have a higher level of intellect in the constituency of Regina—Wascana than other constituencies, and I say this with all due respect to other colleagues and their constituents, having the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, Canada's first accredited university for Indian people in Canada as well as the University of Regina and, as well, just simply the cross section of people whom I represent.

When they come to testing you, you know you have been tested. I take the responses that I got to the questionnaire that I sent to the constituents to be a response that has been well thought out as best they can given the information that they had, and one that will truly bind me.

We are receiving in the order of about 30 responses a day now. The initial influx of responses has subsided to some degree and until such time as I am comfortable that we will have received all the responses from the people who are going to communicate with our office, I will not attempt to propose that the results I am going to give you tonight are final.

I do propose to give you a figure that will show a trend. This will be a report card. It will not be a statement of philosophy. We will save that for the final report, and indeed the report card I think you are going to find interesting as I did.

Coming from Regina—Wascana, primarily a western constituency, one is liable to think that first of all the very weighty issue of Quebec's distinct society clause which we have heard so many negatives of in the past would be held true to form in my constituency. I am pleased to report that in a particular item as one of the

28 proposals presented by the Government of Canada to the constituency general in Canada, in the constituency of Regina—Wascana there was an acceptance of the distinct society clause.

I can tell you that when I read that, it gave me a tremendous amount of relief because I thought that perhaps representing a western constituency, I would be hard pressed to see that kind of support. It was not unanimous. I do not want to say for a moment that it was unanimous, no, but it was approved in a majority. The distinct society clause as presented in one of the 28 was supported by a margin of constituents from my constituency that I say at the outset gave me great relief.

As a matter of fact, when I read all 28 proposals and the numerical results, I find that other than in areas where the constituents did not understand the precise meaning, such as question 23 for those who are following my remarks and have their forms in front of them, one with respect to the federal government and its declaratory powers, the majority of them were brave enough to say they were undecided. As a result, that tells me they did not understand the question, but as we go through the many categories, the very first one, shared citizenship and diversity, again a good substantial majority with respect to point one.

I mentioned point two, the matter of the distinct society clause. Our constituency accepts that wholeheartedly.

Point number three, that is the matter of the aboriginal participation in the current constitutional process, a very significant number. I would guess without calculating the percentages that 75 per cent of the people felt that the aboriginal community should have a stronger role to play in the development of a Canadian Constitution.

That holds true to point four, aboriginal self-government and the aboriginal constitutional process. As well, there is point six, the representation of aboriginal peoples in the Senate. We find a declining number of people who are supporting these items as I proceed, items three, four, five and six, but nevertheless, in the majority.

We find people rather strongly agreeing on some items. We look at the column entitled "agree" and we have to extrapolate that. When one goes from strong agreement to general agreement, perhaps there are