

*Government Orders*

But there will be one thing that I am sure he will not want to talk about and I will not want to talk about, and that is the Constitution. It was in 1980 that we started debate on the Constitution and now it is 1992, going to 1993. On October 26, I will close the book. Those who wish to talk constitution after that better not vote for me because it will not be one of my priorities.

The Constitution is not everything. That is why I hope that by October 26 we will get back on the real problem of this nation. Canadians want us to deal with the problem of the made in Canada recession that is still with us and will not disappear the way things are going.

There is the problem of record unemployment, challenges like environmental protection and social justice, challenges like returning real prosperity to Canada and repairing the shattered hopes and dreams of those who stand in line for welfare and for UIC payments. It is very sad for those who have to stand in line for their daily bread.

I want us to get back to this problem right away. When I was travelling throughout the nation this summer going from Victoria to St. John's, people were talking about their problems. It was sad to see people 50 years of age, not sure they will have a job tomorrow. These people no longer have a dream for their children. Fishermen in Atlantic Canada are completely desperate because of the situation. They want us to talk about these problems. They want us to stop talking about the Constitution. I can tell them that after October 26 we will just talk about the economy and try to give them hope again.

The Liberal Party has worked very hard on this constitutional program. We tried to be very consistent as we spoke. When the party asked me to make a presentation to the Belanger-Campeau commission, we were the only federal party there to present an official position. After the discussions that led to this presentation in Montreal in April 1991, we had a nine point program where we gave the process to this government and the substance to solve the problem. I say to the government that we have appreciated that it has taken most of the process we have suggested and even more. In the process, the most important was the referendum that will once and for all Canadians give a voice in the Constitution. That was reflected in the Beaudoin-Dobbie report and was approved by the party at the national

convention we held in Hull in February. All along we have pleaded for a strong, united Canada from sea to sea to sea.

We have said that any constitutional accord must not make Canada more difficult to govern. It must make it easier to adapt to new economic realities and challenges. It must not paralyse our national government and it must reflect our fundamental values. In my view, and in the view of my party, the new constitutional accord meets these four tests.

I will not talk about all the points but I will make some observations on the substance of the deal, such as the Canada clause for example. We were asking for a Canada clause because it was very important for us to have a clause where there was a commitment by all Canadians to the future of this nation, and the Canada clause is there. Of course, there will be some lawyers who will disagree with the meaning of one word or another but the spirit is there.

For example, the linguistic duality was extremely important to us.

[*Translation*]

Because to us, it is the very essence of Canada. It is what makes Canada a country that, as the Prime Minister said earlier, is an example to the world when we consider what is happening in the world today. In Europe, for instance, they are trying to build a federation and there will have to be a division of powers between the European Community, independent countries and even regions within those countries. However, the issue of linguistic diversity will always be a problem.

Here in Canada, we believe it is possible to be a francophone and feel at home anywhere in this country. Personally, I had the wonderful experience, thanks to a by-election, of being returned to Parliament as a member for the maritimes. Today I represent Acadians in this House. For two years I have been going to the riding of Beauséjour, to live and talk with Acadians, and I see how proud they are to be French.

You go to mass in Cap-Pelé, and it is as French as any village or town we have in Quebec. People there are very proud. They even talk baseball in French because of Réal Cormier. This is something that happens in other places in Canada as well. It is something I have always experi-