

appearance would be to suggest, on behalf of over 7 million Canadians, an amendment to the proposed Constitution, namely, the incorporation of cultural rights, including heritage linguistic rights, under the charter of rights and freedoms.

Three weeks later I wrote to the hon. Minister of Justice (Mr. Chrétien) recommending that the concept of multiculturalism be brought into the proposed resolution. On November 27, 1980, I wrote again to the special joint committee suggesting amendments to the proposed Constitution which would reflect the cultural pluralistic society of Canada. In addition to the above actions, I lobbied in caucus and sought the support of every cabinet minister to ensure that multiculturalism be given appropriate attention in the proposed Constitution.

Why was I pressing for this change to the proposed resolution? I was motivated by the thousands of representations made to me regarding this particular amendment. On behalf of the ethnocultural groups and the 4,000 individual Canadians who made representations to me to ensure in the Constitution that the rights of all cultural groups are protected, I wish to thank the government, both opposition parties, the Senate and the special joint Constitution committee for agreeing to Section 27 of the proposed resolution, which reads:

This charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians.

Placing multiculturalism as a separate section in the charter of rights ensures that, in interpreting such provisions as Section 14, right to interpreters, Section 15, equality rights, and Section 22, preservation of third language rights, the courts will have to be conscious of the importance of these rights as they relate to cultural groups.

● (1540)

I would like to congratulate the Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism, Canadian Citizenship Federation, Canadian Federation of Civil Liberties and Human Rights Associations, Canadian Polish Congress, National Italian-Canadian Congress, German-Canadian Committee on the Constitution, Council of National Ethnocultural Organizations of Canada and many other groups and individuals who made such excellent presentations to the special joint committee on the subject of preserving and enhancing the multicultural heritage of Canada by entrenching the concept into the Constitution.

Expressions of appreciation regarding this amendment are already being communicated to the capital. Dr. L. G. Polymenakos, president of the Greek community of metropolitan Toronto, said this:

The Greek community is in full support of this amendment, and are extremely pleased that the government has adopted such a basic form of human rights.

I quote the Lithuanian Community Association of Toronto:

We are pleased that this amendment has been included in the Constitution, as opposed to the preamble.

I wish to read a telegram from the Canadian Polish Congress:

Resolved, that the annual meeting of the Canadian Polish Congress (Toronto District) held on March 7, 1981, at Toronto and representing 50,000 Canadians

of Polish origin . . . expresses its thanks to the federal government for introducing an amendment to the Constitution which recognizes the concept of multiculturalism in Canada.

[Translation]

That Canada should be recognized as a cultural pluralistic society is a *fait accompli* and an enviable achievement which all Canadians strive for. Canada must consider both reality and the aim to achieve.

[English]

We have heard from the official opposition and from the premiers of the provinces about the idea of patriating the Constitution first and then allowing Canadians to decide what should be in the charter of rights. We heard this a moment ago from the hon. member for Lethbridge-Foothills (Mr. Thacker). They said that we should not impose upon the parliamentarians of Great Britain the task of deciding what should be in the Canadian Constitution.

I would like to ask those critics to assess the process that the proposed resolution for a joint Address to Her Majesty the Queen respecting the Constitution of Canada went through. Are they suggesting that hon. members and senators who worked so hard on the Constitution committee are not Canadians? Are they saying that the 97 groups of witnesses who appeared before the committee are not Canadians? Such critics are insulting the 323 Canadian groups and 639 individual Canadians who made written submissions suggesting various amendments, many of which have been accepted by the joint Senate and House of Commons Constitution committee. I submit that all of the above people are Canadians. Therefore, the proposed resolution before us with some 58 amendments will be a truly Canadian Constitution—a Constitution written in Canada by Canadians, for Canada and for Canadians.

I would like to respond to the ill-informed critics who have charged that the proposed Constitution with its Charter of Rights and Freedoms is the obsession of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). Hon. members of the official opposition have been writing letters to members on this side of the House stating that the Liberal members have little courage to do what is right for Canada, that we are afraid to stand up to the authoritarian discipline or "captivating sorcery of our leader."

I have in my right hand 4,000 signatures from Canadians who support the proposed resolution to patriate the Constitution with a Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In my left hand I have 31 representations opposing the inclusion of the charter of rights. The people of Parkdale-High Park and other Canadians have spoken in this chamber today. They have told me how to vote, not the Prime Minister.

The Constitution package before us is not a "Trudeau package". The Charter of Rights and Freedoms in a patriated Constitution is what all the backbenchers and ministers on this side of the House have been pressing for. This is what the Canadians who elected us have been thirsting for for over 50 years. Thank God we have a leader who is sensitive to the wishes of the majority, a leader who does not dictate but leads. The Prime Minister is only as good as his ministers and his