

### *The Constitution*

that will provide the flexibility to meet the changing demands and challenges of the future.

It is because of these constitutional proposals and the future of this country that we are here tonight in this place to speak to all who will hear in the hope that they will listen.

I believe Canada can be many things. It is a beautiful nation that sweeps north to south and west to east with wonderful people who have hearts as large as the country itself.

Above all, Canada is what you make it. It is a place where caring individuals and likewise a caring government can make a difference. It is like a lovingly sewn patchwork quilt, with each square of a different design. Today the quilt is worn around the edges and is beginning to fray, but my own square of Winnipeg North still has hope that this quilt may yet keep us warm even in these troubled times.

The economy has made my people afraid for this coming year. They are afraid that they may lose their jobs or never be able to find one. It is their foremost concern. I am pleased to say that my leader has announced on behalf of the Liberal caucus a five-point proposal on emergency economic reform to bring Canada back to work.

I am equally pleased to say that this government has already agreed to adopt one of our economic proposals. These proposals are timely for my constituents who fear for their families and their futures.

To them, for the most part the constitutional talks are like a conversation on the other side of a door. Bits and pieces reach your ear, but the whole escapes you.

They find the 28 proposals too large, unwieldy and time consuming to compete with their everyday thoughts of living. Yet they do indicate to me that there are three or four key issues which warrant federal attention.

First, the distinct society. They want this issue front and centre of the constitutional debate. They want it settled. Most have only kind words for Quebec and they want a united Canada.

"Lay this issue to rest," they say, "mend the tear."

Second, a reformed Senate. My constituents feel the west is underrepresented in Ottawa and we want an elected, effective and equal Senate.

Third, aboriginal self-government. The future health and viability of our native people also concerns the people of Winnipeg North. Many of my constituents come from other countries and now call this country home, but they do not believe it is right to displace one people for another, one race for another and one culture for another. All can live in this country in harmony, independent and with dignity.

Fourth, they would like a strong and caring central government.

I have had more time to study the proposals. That is part of my job. I believe the things I will say might also be the feelings of my constituents.

I look at my colleagues. I know most of them personally through our years of working for the communities of Canada. I feel with them a communion. I trust that I can speak freely with you about my feelings for our future in the country we call home—for most, their country of birth; for me and others, our country of choice.

What will the future hold for our country? Where will we be when the ink has dried on our new constitution, further behind or further ahead? That is up to you and me.

Here in Canada many things were taken for granted for many years. People believed they would have jobs, a home for their families, enough money for retirement, a bright future for their children. These are some of the things we take for granted as our due, but just being Canadian is not a guarantee we will have all these things. We have to fight for them.

There is one statement in particular in the new constitutional proposals that should spark a revolution. The government said: "In response to criticism—the Government of Canada commits itself not to introduce new Canada-wide shared-cost programs and conditional transfers in areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction without the approval of at least seven provinces representing 50 per cent of the population".

What does this mean? To me it means no day care. What about our children? Seven years ago the government promised the mothers and the fathers of this country that they would have universal day care, univer-