

The Constitution seeks to protect minority language rights. Of no small import has been the treatment given Canada's two official languages, and the guarantee of minority language education rights. These are fundamental aspects, underpinning such previously mentioned freedoms as personal mobility anywhere in Canada and taking employment or establishing residence in any of the ten provinces or the territories. As a Quebecker and as a Canadian I rejoice in these vitally important elements, for they represent to me a true affirmation of one nation, Canada.

I regret deeply, however, that the government of my province has chosen to spurn this Constitution, to make a mockery of the efforts of Prime Minister Trudeau and the leaders of the other provinces. Of course, you know I refer to another of those bills of the National Assembly, Bill 62 the "Override Bill." This simple legislation simply shows the limited vision of M. Lévesque and his colleagues.

I can only repeat to you tonight, and to all Quebeckers, that the Canadian charter is for the common good of all the Canadian people. Whether you live in Tuktoyaktuk, Kamloops, Lachine, or the Annapolis Valley, the preservation of your rights and freedoms is in this Constitution and Charter of Rights.

It is specious for the Parti Quebecois to argue that it is a "foreign legal framework" and that Bill 62 saves the legislative powers of the National Assembly from some unknown danger inherent in that framework. There is no special clause in the Constitution for Quebec legislature no more than for any other legislature.

But there is a special clause in Bill 62 that permits the National Assembly to override any of the "Judicial Rights" in the Quebec Charter. Rather a case of "Now you have it - and now you don't!" And there is the power to adopt laws which are discriminatory or create inequalities.

I must be candid with you - there is an override clause in the Canadian Charter, Section 33. It enables a legislature to enact a particular law overriding a particular right specified in the Charter. It presupposes very careful consideration and that action will be in the best interests of the people. What you must note is that Section 33 is for exceptional circumstances. Any declaration made under it must be reviewed and re-enacted within five years or it cannot remain in force.