

*The Constitution*

round of constitutional reassessment, another move to repatriate the BNA Act. This round started by Pearson is just now reaching its culmination.

I mentioned earlier that my vision of Canada is vastly different from that which has been created by our inept governments of the last century. In the same manner, my vision of the ideal constitution is equally different.

I also said earlier that a constitution should be a document upon which to build a nation. I do not see any evidence in this document for building the kind of Canada I would like to see. I should qualify that and say that I do not see enough evidence in this document for building the kind of Canada I would like to see.

There are some historically important measures in it. I refer specifically to the provisions for equalization, to the bill of rights and its guarantee of rights to women, to the handicapped, to multicultural groups among others, to the recognition of the duality of this country, and to the recognition of aboriginal rights. I consider these to be major points. And for these important reasons I will support this package. But at the same time, it is still a capital "L" Liberal document. I for one do not want to build a capital "L" Liberal Canada. Were I drafting a constitution for Canada, I would reflect more the philosophy of Thomas More than that of Machiavelli.

I would include all of the specific points I just mentioned. But rather than institutionalizing a nation built on laissez-faire capitalism, I would want to be able to build a nation based on egalitarianism. Canada has that potential.

● (1540)

Consider the size of our country. Consider the incredible wealth we have here in minerals, oil and gas, forestry and human resources. There is no reason why in a land such as Canada one particular man should be able to cover his driveway in crushed meteorite because it is not dusty while another man, such as one man in my riding, lives in an underground hovel covered with logs and earth. You can bet that is dusty. There is no reason why Indians in northwestern Ontario should be forced to live on mercury-polluted fish, or why a man is forced to sleep on the streets in Vancouver. In Canada, there is simply no excuse for this.

In constructing the Constitution now, we are laying the foundation for building the Canada of the future. I still believe in the potential of Canada that I had in mind in the 1960s. I believe that we can and must build that kind of nation. The question remains whether this Constitution gives us a good enough foundation to do that. I think it goes only part way.

I have serious reservations about the process we have all been following in this particular act of constitutional construction. I do not refer necessarily to unilateral action. While on the one hand I might have preferred an approach that was not unilateral, I can accept, intellectually, the need and the legitimacy for such unilateral action. I will return to this point in a few moments.

In the opening of his comments, my friend, the hon. member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans) said:

I have listened to many points of view, and I have found it sometimes difficult to determine exactly how much of what is being said is real, how much is partisan, how much is misinformation. I assume it is all said honestly—

I agree with his sentiments up to the last point. I cannot assume it is all said honestly.

If all of us in this process had been dealing honestly, we would not have the conflicts and divisions that we see today. If what we all said had been real, non-partisan and informed, we would be much closer to agreement than we are today. I speak not only of the members of this House but also of members of the Senate, members of the provincial legislatures and of the many academics, journalists and others who have offered their thoughts on the subject.

In this House, I have seen members of the party to my right act in what I consider to be only partisan interests. Out of the House, I need only refer to the ads placed in newspapers throughout the country by the Conservative Party pandering to the prejudices of many.

I have seen the government members opposite act in what I consider to be nothing more than self-serving cynicism. To me the need for including guarantees of rights for women, the handicapped and natives should have been self-evident, not just so hon. members could secure a few more votes.

I have seen some members of the Senate—a body which, as constituted at present, I consider to be unjust and perverse—balk because their already unjustified power was to be slightly reduced. I have seen provincial premiers act purely in self-interest, not in the interest of the country as a whole. One is reminded of Mark Antony's address to the Romans. In part it read:

They that have done this deed are honourable:  
What private griefs they have, alas, I know not,  
That made them do it: they are wise and honourable,  
And will, no doubt, with reasons answer you.

We know full well that Brutus, Cassius and Casca were not honourable men. I fear that a more fitting epithet for many of us involved in this process might be in the last lines of the same speech when Mark Antony says:

Now let it work. Mischief, thou art afoot,  
Take thou what course thou wilt!

In recent years, and more so in recent months, we have heard much of western alienation. Let us not kid ourselves, it does exist. While I cannot subscribe to the methods used by many western Tories and by many western oil interests in their approach to the matter, as a westerner, I know full well that this alienation must be addressed very soon. The address cannot be made only in economic terms. It must be made in terms of the distribution of power and, more important, in terms of attitude.

For example, in 1867 and 1870, just after lands which are now the prairie provinces were bought from the Hudson's Bay Company, Louis Riel, the Metis, and the Scottish settlers at Red River were forced to take action in self-preservation when