

The Constitution

government. Where in the rhetoric of the last election campaign did Canadian people, even those voting in Quebec and Ontario, give the Liberal Party of Canada a mandate to change the Constitution unilaterally through the Parliament of Westminster; to emasculate the powers of western provinces so that the population centres of Ontario and Quebec could control western resources, making the west a colony forever; to expropriate and nationalize the energy industry as it is doing with its energy policy; to change the parliamentary procedures in place to protect people from excessively centralized powers which can only lead to an executive form of democracy; to entrench a charter of rights which contains questionable wording and has serious omissions?

Where, in fact, was the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) in the last election on these very issues? His handlers were allowing his body to be seen, but his thoughts and ambitions were well hidden from public scrutiny and debate. The Liberal Party of Canada, the party of entrenched power at any cost, at any level of morality—one year ago it was 18 cents—are now playing games with structures affecting our basic freedoms. With this constitutional resolution, the Liberal Party of Canada, in my opinion and in the opinion of other colleagues who have spoken, is fanatically seeking to achieve power objectives before the public can express its will in a democratic fashion.

This is the reason for time allocation, for the threat of closure and for the great rush to put this matter through the legislative processes before July 1, 1981.

They love to say that it has been in the process of negotiation for 53 years.

Mr. Pinard: Fifty-four years.

Mr. Huntington: I am now told that it is 54 years. They do not tell us that in those 54 years it has been discussed for approximately 48 days at the official level, or less than one day a year. They do not tell us that the extremely important and dangerous entrenchment package was not part of the discussions over that period of time. They try to belittle the fact that elected representatives of the people are worried about issues which were not part of those negotiations. They do not tell us why they want to entrench aspects which go beyond the protection of our basic freedoms. Rather, they work on a shallow perception of a docile population. They do not tell us why they are removing the right to property; they sneak it into the terminology.

The constitutional resolution is, by all the rules and precedents of a representative monarchical parliamentary democracy, illegal because it is a coup d'état. It changes the very form of our government.

The hon. member for Surrey-White Rock-North Delta (Mr. Friesen) in his speech on February 19 and 20, as reported at pages 7499 and 7581 of *Hansard*, ably pointed out the following:

The Liberal government is giving the citizen rights. It is now telling the citizen what he or she can do.

I urge those members who have not read his speech to do so. This Liberal party charter assigns rights in the same manner and employs the same language as communist charters. As any thinking person knows, rights assigned and given by rulers can also be denied and taken away by rulers. I see an hon. member opposite shaking his head. I suggest that hon. members opposite take off their blinkers, get out of the tunnel and open up their minds to what they are doing to this country.

• (1610)

The U.S. constitution, on the other hand, comes from the citizenry, and the powers of government are by the people, for the people. It is not a government of the majority telling them what their rights will be.

As my colleague, the hon. member for Surrey-White Rock-North Delta said as reported at page 7519 of *Hansard* for February 20, 1981:

The government is presenting a proposed charter which purports to give rights to citizens. It is presenting an illusion; it is a fraud. It is not entrenching the rights of citizens; it is entrenching the power of the state.

In my opinion, the people of this great country had better wake up and shake off their apathy before it is too late. The priorities in this debate are not in order. Apart from economics, our national problem is regionalism. It goes right through our country; it is in our cities and our provinces. Federally, the structure of our Parliament does not address this problem, but rather creates it.

Before this resolution is passed, it is my belief that we should discuss the form and structure of our government. The structure of our present government needs amendment. The British parliamentary form of government has great strengths and great weaknesses. Its strengths lie in the fact that it is of a very slow and cumbersome nature. It acts like a huge sponge which absorbs the forces of change within a big, cumbersome and complicated society. It absorbs these forces, and down through the ages it has been able to protect man's freedom better than any other form of government yet devised. This House turfs out those of us who fail to continue to relate to our constituents on the emotional level, and that is one of the great strengths of the system. It allows us, as it should to debate the great ideologies of change of our times.

A key principle and an aspect that is not widely understood is that we are a monarchical parliamentary system. Therein lies the power to demand delay for more mature thought on these forces of change. It is during national crises of arrogance and lawlessness that constitutions are tested. If those constitutions fail—and history is full of examples—nations are destroyed. The power to demand delay for more mature thought has to exist, which is most desirable and in the public interest since governments with parliamentary majorities which have been too long in office have a natural human tendency to abuse power and, perhaps, to go beyond constitutional limits.

Under the royal prerogatives, the sovereign has four instruments with which to procure this essential element of freedom. It has the right to veto legislation, the right to dismiss a government, the right to dissolve Parliament, and the right to