

*The Constitution*

aspects of this charter of rights that we hate the French. Why is it that the premier of the province of Quebec, newly elected with a large mandate, is against this charter of rights? Is it not a strange twist of fate that it is precisely for the same reason the people of Quebec who have acquired certain advantages and gained certain momentum in restoring a certain cultural integrity in their province now feel oppressed by the very person who portrays himself as the king and the saviour of the legitimate rights and aspirations of his compatriots?

These are the things that are wrong with this charter of rights. It is wrong to believe that just because we now entrench in the Constitution a charter of rights and give the Supreme Court jurisdiction over the rights of individuals that all will be solved and no one will ever again be discriminated against. Some members on the opposite side have stood up and said just that. One minister stood the other day and said: "Is it not beautiful to know that we shall wake up one morning, having done this deed here in Parliament, and there will never be any discrimination in this country again?" How naive can those people be? Do they really believe you can legislate the attitude of people, that you can prevent bigots from acting like bigots by simply making a law? Of course you cannot.

We have a great history in this country, a history of pride, freedom and a belief in all that is beautiful and great brought to humankind through democracy. Why is it so urgent that we now entrench a charter of rights? What is so wrong with our Constitution or so wrong in the country that we have to take these very dramatic steps?

What is wrong is that we have a Prime Minister who has a certain vision about his country that does not coincide with the mainstream of life and does not coincide with the history and the tradition on which this country was built. He is not so concerned about a repetition of certain events which took place in 1970 when he imposed the War Measures Act. He is not so much concerned with that. What our Prime Minister wants to do, and he has said this in many speeches to his fellow Canadians in the province of Quebec, is to attain two objectives through his charter of rights. To do so he is prepared to sacrifice everything else that forms part of this constitutional package.

The Prime Minister believes in a unitary state as opposed to a confederate system. He wants to lay the foundation to allow for the evolution of a unitary system of government in this country.

Secondly, as he has said on so many occasions, he is going to bring the French fact in Canada beyond an irreversible position. He is devious and sinister in the way he is going about that. I am not saying this is bad or good, but those are the two things the Prime Minister has in mind in respect of this charter of rights, and that is why he, with all the political skill and deviousness he possesses, has managed to divert this debate away from that about which we should be talking to a discussion of nothing but his charter of rights.

Is the entrenchment of my freedom of speech in the Constitution going to redress this frenzied sense of wrong which exists in the west, this threat of separatism? Of course it will

not. Is the protection against discrimination on grounds of race, religion, colour and all these things going to redress this frenzied sense of wrong in the west? Of course it is not.

Let me conclude with this comment. I would tell you what this constitutional debate we are engaged in and now completing will do. It will destroy the dream which has been laid out for us by Sir John A. Macdonald.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier):** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired.

**Some hon. Members:** Go ahead.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier):** The hon. member may continue with unanimous consent.

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Oberle:** Thank you, Sir. I do not wish to abuse the courtesy of my friends, so I will conclude. What I am saying is that if we continue with what we are doing, in ignoring the real things we should be talking about, namely, the changes to our constitutional framework, we will destroy the dream held out to us by Sir John A. Macdonald when he said we are a great country and we shall be one of the greatest in the universe if we preserve unity in this country and if we preserve confederation. We shall sink into insignificance and diversity if we suffer to be broken. There is a message there. I have a great feeling that if we continue with what we are doing right now, we shall suffer the breakup of our great country.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Social Development):** Mr. Speaker, with the permission of the House, may I point out that it is 9.59 p.m.? I could begin my speech tomorrow.

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier):** Permission has not been granted.

**Mr. Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member for Edmonton wants my wisdom very badly, especially during those hours when we have to deal with some of the propositions I will have great pleasure dealing with tomorrow, because some of them are rather funny.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier):** I regret to interrupt the hon. minister, but it is now ten o'clock.

● (2200)

## PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.