

woe-betide-the-country, that this will devour the nation, that this will be the downfall of Canadian democracy. There are times, listening to the Leader of the Opposition, when I am reminded of the character in the Woody Allen movie who said: "We stand at the crossroads; on the one hand there is total extinction and on the other utter annihilation." Not much of a choice. The danger we have to be fearful of here is not this resolution. The real danger we have to watch out for is the fearmongers in this country who are attempting to use this resolution and this initiative as a way of raising fears and alarms throughout Canada and creating their own divisiveness with those tactics alone. A concern to our caucus and a concern to us in the west is that somehow the rest of Canadians will take as the representatives of the west those provincial premiers who have their own objectives, legitimate as they may be, for fighting for their own continuation in the power game they have been playing for decades. We should not assume that this is the full range of points of view coming from my region of the country because they do not speak for the hon. member for St. Boniface (Mr. Bockstael), the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) or for many of the members in the New Democratic Party. Yet that was the only point of view being heard at the conference and that is why it is critical at this time, in this Parliament, that we have the opportunity to hear from people with all ranges of points of view.

● (2020)

It is important to dispel some of the myths which have been perpetrated about what this resolution really means. The first was the one that was parlayed in this House last night and is being heard across the land. Mr. Lougheed talks of total war and the Leader of the Opposition was expressing that this was the final moment, this was the Armageddon, that he was concerned that somehow the country was going to break into pieces, that somehow the federal government, with this resolution, is involved in some dark conspiracy to fundamentally change the framework of Canada. It is like the Lyon approach which says that we are on the slippery slide of republicanism. The fact of the matter is we have to look at what the resolution is really all about, what are the elements of this grand conspiracy about which Mr. Lyon, the Leader of the Opposition and others are beating the drums of fear across the nation. Well, we are talking about bringing the constitution back to Canada. That is really a radical and extreme measure—that the country wants to have its own constitution. Now, isn't that an awful thing to consider, Mr. Speaker, that we may want the power to amend our own constitution? But then they say: Look, how you are going to amend it; you are going to have a referendum. That is how section 42 has somehow been raised as the great bogeyman of this constitutional debate. They somehow found something in the resolution that expresses in some way the deep, dark conspiracy of the Liberal party to destroy Canada in section 42. What was it really all about, Mr. Speaker? It simply said that somehow we are denying the rights of the provinces. Well, then, they haven't read section 42 very carefully. What we have said in this resolution is that

the provinces have a full and equal chance to present a new amending formula—

**Mr. Andre:** What about section 42?

**Mr. Axworthy:** —and we can negotiate that. And if they don't like that, they can have the Victoria formula. The provinces have full and equal rights, Mr. Speaker. Then, we say if they cannot agree to that, we must go to a referendum. So they are saying they don't trust us. But, after all, section 42 requires a debate in this House. Well, what we are saying is that obviously the members of the Conservative party are expressing a deep mistrust of the procedures and processes of Parliament itself. This is an unusual thought for me because I have always believed they were the guardians and defenders of the parliamentary system. I have heard them defend this. They don't want a bill of rights because they have said they can depend on Parliament, but when it comes to the Magna Carta they cannot depend upon Parliament. They cannot have it both ways. Either you believe in Parliament or you do not believe in Parliament. You cannot believe in Parliament on the question of amendment but not believe it on the bill of rights. So they should get their act straight and decide whether they do believe in Parliament and on what issues.

**Mr. Andre:** We don't believe in a dictatorship!

**Mr. Axworthy:** That is part of the other conspiracy. Somehow they have refined the art of character assassination, somehow this is a deep, evil plot by the Prime Minister of this country, something he has been hatching over the years—

**Mr. Andre:** That is it.

**Mr. Axworthy:** That is the myth. That is the great Tory lie in this country. That is the great Tory mythology which they have spread up and down this country. Why? Because they cannot use logic, they cannot use reason, they cannot use rationality. So what do they use? They use personality assassination. That is the nature of their attack. It is an interesting comment, you can always tell when the other side does not have an argument because that is when they start picking on people. It goes right back to schoolyard politics and battles. If you really do not have a basis of reason and rationality, what do you do? You pick on the person. We have found out that this art has been developed to a fine form by members over there, because they do not have much reason, much rationality or logic in their position.

Thus we hear the Premier of Manitoba and other members from the opposition saying that a bill of rights is unCanadian, that a bill of rights is really going to destroy the fundamental traditions of our country, that we should adhere to the British system of common law. I am sure hon. members would be interested in the September 22 copy of the *Manchester Guardian* I have here. It says Lord Hailsham and Sir Keith Joseph and all the members of the Margaret Thatcher government are doing two things: one, they are considering a new charter of rights for the British Parliament and, two, they have just ratified the European Convention of Human Rights. I