

The Constitution

Where they may not have the resources in their own province, their own region, they count on the national government to say to Ontario: "Listen here, you must share with those disadvantaged regions". That is part of the process of building a national spirit.

I hear repeatedly that we are in very tough shape economically right now in Toronto. We have very tough unemployment problems. We are losing industry, manufacturing specifically, because of the world conditions, some say partial free trade problems and a whole mixture of things. I am not going to pit it at any particular issue.

We know in our community, and I hear this repeatedly, that our best way of working this out is by making sure that this government, this room that I am speaking in right now, this nation's boardroom, not only speaks for Toronto and not only speaks for Ontario, but speaks for every region of the country so that the standards that my children enjoy can be the same standards that the children enjoy in every other region of the country.

We cannot do that, Mr. Speaker, if we so decentralize the national government that it basically becomes almost like a *maitre d'* to the 10 provincial premiers. My constituents do not want that to happen.

Right now the Government of Canada is supervising probably the loosest federation anywhere in the world. Its powers have been so diminished that when we do get into deep problems economically. It is very tough to manage our way out of them. My constituents are begging me to take the message that this Government of Canada must be strong.

It is not only in terms of domestic issues. Quite frankly, we have to be concerned about who speaks for Canada internationally. Right now we have provinces that have trading houses or consul houses in 20 or 30 different countries in the world. For example, you can go to Italy right now and you will have an Ontario House there, a Quebec House there and a New Brunswick House there alongside the embassy.

The same exists in Japan, Hong Kong, Paris, and England for people who are looking at Canada for investment opportunity, for joint ventures or for trade.

I have talked to some of these people and they want to know who speaks for Canada internationally. Is it the province of Alberta? Is it the province of Ontario? There can be no mistake that internationally there should be

one voice speaking for Canada and it should be the Embassy of Canada, representing all of the provinces. How can a province that does not have the resources of Ontario compete in international affairs? It cannot. It counts on a national embassy to represent all regions properly.

In summary, my constituents are saying to me that we must have a strong national government. We must have national programs and national standards because that is where we create national will.

If we are to have a distinct society, it must be defined in a way where no culture is less than or greater than any other culture. If we can use those things as our guiding principles, then they will create values of caring and approachability and an action oriented community that can be the envy of the world.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ricardo Lopez (Châteauguay): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate this evening on the future of our country.

I have the pleasure and the honour to represent the riding of Châteauguay, which has a population of approximately 100,000 people, of which some 20,000 are English-speaking and 80,000 are French-speaking. The francophones and the anglophones, as well as other ethnic minorities in my riding, are all proud to be Canadians.

I truly regret that some dream merchants try to capitalize on certain aspects that could divide us as Canadians. Our country has a lot more in common, a lot more things that unite us than that divide us. Unfortunately, some people derive great pleasure from denigrating it and to showing only the things that divide us, while dismissing everything that unites us and makes us envied by the whole world.

Do you know, Mr. Speaker, there are millions and millions of people throughout the world who have one dream, and that is to become Canadians. Some Canadians say that it is unbearable in our country and they find all kinds of metaphors to describe our country as bad and mean. It seems to me that those people should realize that there is nothing to be gained by destroying but there is everything to be gained if we can set aside some differences—and those differences do exist—and work together to make this country even greater, even better than it is now.