

*Supply*

this issue, which would ruin the issue because it would die right away, or wait until a new session of Parliament is called. I do not believe Canadians want to wait.

In their anxiety to embarrass the Government, the Conservatives have potentially threatened the very idea that all of us support. We have the pledge of the Prime Minister to progress with this issue before we leave for the summer. However, the way this motion is phrased prevents us from following through with that pledge. That is sloppy homework on the part of the Tory Party.

I believe the Hon. Member for Provencher (Mr. Epp) genuinely wants this issue addressed in the Constitution. I do not think he objects to embarrassing me and the Members of the Government. He likes that, thinks it is great sport, but he does not want that sport carried to the point where it would kill the very issue. He does not want to throw out the baby with the bath water.

By introducing this as a non-confidence motion, the Conservative Party is forcing the Government to vote against it, effectively closing off avenues of debate over the rest of the spring. I think they were delighted when the Prime Minister offered action a week or so ago. We were happy about it.

The Members of the New Democratic Party did raise a legitimate point when they urged some caution. They say there are some questions to be clarified. Reasonable people know that. Reasonable people see that it is all right to send something to a committee for a little bit of second thought. Reasonable people know that provincial Premiers and municipal leaders and all kinds of interested groups would like to express an opinion.

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** Name one.

**Mr. Fisher:** The Hon. Member asks me to name one. I would say that the Government of Prince Edward Island would probably like to be represented here and follow through with their established practice of warning us about their special circumstances. That Conservative Government would like to warn us. It should be given the chance.

The NDP has been right in urging us to go carefully, not to trample into this because of our basic enthusiasm. We can preserve our enthusiasm. We do not have to capitulate. We should be careful and give it some thought.

What we have is a bit of a box. In their enthusiasm, the Conservatives are trying to force the issue too much. The Government has no choice but to oppose the way the issue is presented. We support the issue but we oppose the tactic being used today. We do not agree with the absolute refusal of the NDP to provide any protection, but we agree we need some second thought and more study.

I understand that the various Parties have been negotiating on this issue and will try to present an alternative. I wish the negotiators well. I hope they do not come up with a trap similar to the one we are experiencing because people in my riding would like to see this issue carried forward without a lot of fooling around.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** Questions, answers, comments?

**Mr. Bill McKnight (Kindersley-Lloydminster):** Mr. Speaker, in rising to take part in this very important debate, let me say I and many other Canadians have been waiting overly long to have property rights entrenched in the Constitution. Considerable time and effort went into the Constitution. Witnesses from all across the country spoke of the necessity of putting property rights into it.

I see the Hon. Member for Mississauga North (Mr. Fisher) is leaving. With the unanimous consent of the House, I would now like to introduce the following motion:

That the motion now before the House be taken without being considered as a motion of non-confidence and that at the conclusion of this day's sitting, the motion shall be deemed to have been referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs, that the committee shall report thereon no later than June 7, 1983 and that the said report shall be disposed of no later than June 30, 1983.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** May I explain to the Hon. Member and other Hon. Members that I had understood and had been given official information that a different motion would be presented. I will have to ask for the indulgence of the House while we ascertain the admissibility of the present motion. While doing that, perhaps the Hon. Member could continue his remarks.

**Mr. McKnight:** Mr. Speaker, I had hoped for the unanimous consent of the House in presenting this motion in order to get out of what the Hon. Member for Mississauga North described as a box.

Looking back at the constitutional debate, we do not see the need for additional committee hearings. I draw to the attention of the House that the committee which studied the Constitution in 1981 and 1982 sat for 57 full days. We debated the matter of sending the resolution to the committee for 15 days in the House of Commons.

• (1630)

Mr. Speaker, the original resolution was debated in this House for 29 days. The resolution as amended in this House was debated for ten days. That is a total of 54 full days of debate within the House of Commons plus the 57 days within the Committee. I believe that anyone who was concerned or wished to express a view opposing property rights certainly had ample opportunity to do so within that time period.

When I look at the motion presented by the New Democratic Party, which was ruled out of order, I look upon it with some suspicion. I am sure that, with the group of advisors I saw in the lobby available to the New Democratic Party, and with the Clerk of the Table at the disposal of the New Democratic Party, if they favoured any form of property rights being put in the Constitution of Canada they certainly could have done so in a form that would have been found acceptable.

The proposal of the New Democratic Party does not say that they wish to entrench property rights within the Constitution of Canada. It says that they wish to entrench the principle of