

this accord will be settled according to the accord or within the framework of the accord, and that once constitutional legislation is passed that flows from this accord, it will not be the purpose of the government to entertain further constitutional change to the constitution which requires unanimity or seven out of ten provinces for a period of five years from that time.

Senator Murray: For clarification, I think what the honourable senator is asking is that the federal government would undertake to veto any proposal for any proposed amendment of the constitution originating with the provinces during that period.

Senator Austin: No. I have no difficulty with the federal government carrying out studies, holding exchanges, doing analysis, but that it will not bring forward legislation for national debate for a period of five years.

I say to you, and I hope honourable senators will understand, that what will carry the approval of the constitutional accord in the province of British Columbia, and what will carry it in the province of Alberta, where I believe there is some difficulty obtaining approval, is the assurance that the agenda of this country will not be driven by constitutional questions for a period of time into the future.

Quite frankly, and I say this with caution but I believe out of necessity, there is a deep resentment in western Canada and in my province—I will speak for my province particularly—that the national agenda has been driven too much by constitutional issues and too much by the internal debates within the province of Quebec. I say that not with approval, but to state what I believe is a fact in the life of my province.

I believe the health of this country depends on turning to issues that most concern individual Canadians, their security, their potential for economic mobility upwards, the lives of their children, and the opportunities which this country can afford those children. I believe with all my heart that if this country will turn in that direction, then our future will be secured in a way that will be a security to this nation itself. Thank you, honourable senators.

● (1200)

Senator Murray: I take it my friend will let us know prior to October 26 whether the conditions he has posed for a “yes” vote have been met.

Senator Austin: I think it will be on the record, honourable senators, whether those conditions have been met. If you meet those conditions, something which will be easy to see, then I assure you my vote will be in the affirmative.

Senator Frith: This is, however, to be a secret ballot, I take it. You will not be asking all Canadians to tell you how they will vote, will you, Senator Murray?

Senator Murray: Just my colleagues in the Senate.

Hon. John Buchanan: Honourable senators, almost 14 years ago I attended my first federal-provincial conference as a participant, and at that time we discussed the Constitution of [Senator Austin.]

Canada. For over 12 years thereafter I attended, as a participant, every federal-provincial conference on either the economy or the Constitution. Most of them over that period of time were on the Constitution.

I was also a signatory to the 1982 accord which was mentioned this morning. Frankly, that was an imperfect document, leaving out, as it did, some 8 million Canadians from the Constitution of Canada.

I was also a signatory to the 1987 Meech Lake Accord, as well as to the completion of the accord in 1990. In my opinion that accord was an excellent document, although it was certainly not perfect. We also saw the failure of the Meech Lake Accord.

Over the last number of months I listened to what was going on with the premiers of Canada and the Prime Minister. Having sat as I did with every premier since 1977, as well as three prime ministers, I could not help but say to myself that it was *déjà vu*, in that much of what was being discussed had been discussed for many years. Those discussions culminated in 1990 with the unfortunate failure of the Meech Lake Accord.

We have before us now another document which, frankly, is not a perfect document. After all, in political life in dealing with the Constitution there is no possibility of getting what could be called a “perfect document”.

The booklet which has been distributed to us states, “Our Future Together—An Agreement for Constitutional Renewal”. That is exactly what it is. Canadians are rather tired of the Constitution debate. They have been listening to it for many years. It is time to get on with other things.

For that reason and many others I certainly will be voting “yes” on the referendum, as I will be voting in favour of the resolution before the Senate.

Therefore, I move the adjournment of the debate.

On motion of Senator Buchanan, debate adjourned.

UNITED NATIONS

PEACEKEEPING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. B. Alasdair Graham rose pursuant to notice of Wednesday, September 9, 1992:

That he will call the attention of the Senate to UN peacekeeping.

He said: Honourable senators, last week I attended the annual meeting of Liberal International in Mainz, Germany. The discussion ranged from free trade in a changing world to the evolving situations in Latin America, Africa, East and Central Europe.

On Saturday, with some 500 delegates from 35 countries, I had the privilege of chairing an in-depth discussion entitled, “United Nations Peacekeeping and War Prevention.”