

The Constitution

other times you give. That is what confederation is all about—sharing.

The federal government offered a good deal on the offshore. The provincial government turned it down, claiming the only important thing was ownership. Yet it has refused to present the matter to the Supreme Court, the only body which can decide ownership, in spite of the fact that Newfoundland claims to have an excellent case. Many people believe Newfoundland has a special case, a unique case. But only the Supreme Court of Canada can decide, and the province will not submit the matter to it. It refuses to negotiate. It refuses to go to court. Meanwhile the rhetoric continues. Ottawa-bashing continues. An ugly, anti-Canadian feeling continues to be fostered in our province. That is the saddest thing of all, Mr. Speaker.

All across this county groups and individuals are attempting to balkanize, to cut off a piece of the country, to build a wall in order to achieve separation. This is a challenge to the essential nature of Canada.

There are those in my own province who would encourage extreme Newfoundland nationalism that they know was present at the time of confederation. In 1949 the vote for Canada was put. There were those who wanted Newfoundland to be independent, and they feared Canada. This feeling was reflected in an anti-confederate song which ended with the line "Come near at your peril, Canadian wolf." Today there are those who are trying to preserve the myth of the Canadian wolf, except today there is a variation on the theme, which goes, "Come near when we want you, but only if we want you." So the challenge and the conflict are still present in Newfoundland, the conflict between those for confederation and those against, those for one country and those for ten, those for the Trudeau vision and those for the Lévesque vision. But Newfoundland has changed since confederation and Newfoundlanders have changed. In 1949 just over 50 per cent voted for Canada. Today the vote would be overwhelmingly for Canada, because since that time we have come to know and appreciate our Canadian neighbours. Since that time we have become Canadian.

While we may look back nostalgically at the past, this very act suggests a different future. Surely that future is within and not without Canada. Surely our Canadian identity enhances rather than diminishes our Newfoundland identity. Surely we do not have to be either Newfoundlanders or Canadians. We can be both. We must be both, just as French Canadians must be both and Alberta Canadians must be both. Canada draws its strength from its differences but only when those differences exist in harmony and unity.

There are those who want to put Newfoundland culture on the shelf and make it a museum piece. Those people want to build up the myth of the modern Canadian wolf. But our society is strong because we are growing and developing. Our people are strong because they are not only Newfoundlanders but Canadians. That is why I am shocked and outraged at the recent hysterical outburst of the Premier of Newfoundland. We heard he would take the federal government to court over

this constitutional initiative. He must know full well that he does not have a chance. But he is persuaded to this cause because he is a member of the Lougheed, Lyon, Lévesque group—and we all clearly know Mr. Lévesque's intentions. Still, Premier Peckford seeks the authority of the court in a case he cannot win and, at the same time—

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I wonder if the minister would clarify whether he is suggesting, in the name of his government, that Premier Lyon of Manitoba and Premier Peckford of Newfoundland are separatists. Is that what he is saying?

Mr. Rompkey: You will have to rule on that point of order, Mr. Speaker, but I have said what I have said and I am sure the—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please. I think the hon. minister perhaps does deserve the usual comment which goes in such cases. The Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) took the opportunity to do what has been done on some occasions, that is, to interrupt an hon. member who has the floor and to ask a question. I did not underline the right of the hon. minister either to answer a question, if he saw fit, or simply to continue with his remarks. Having said that, I recognize the minister again.

Mr. Rompkey: Mr. Speaker, there was a clear grouping of premiers and we know clearly what certain members of that group stand for. I think it is pretty clear.

Some hon. Members: Oh!

Mr. Rompkey: Premier Peckford refuses to submit offshore ownership to the court in spite of the fact that many believe Newfoundland has a good case. Why this ambivalence? Why is there this contradiction? If the courts are trustworthy and if only they can rule on ownership, and if ownership is the "be all" and "end all", then why are they not asked to judge? Mr. Peckford will ask them to rule on a matter which affects the future of Canada, but not on a matter which affects the future of Newfoundland and Labrador. One thing we can say about the plan is that he is consistent in his inconsistency. However, several days ago Mr. Peckford rose to an all-time high in rhetoric by charging that the proposed resolution on the Canadian constitution would take away the rights of the Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to denominational education and would leave the way open for changes to the Labrador boundary as it now exists.

● (1650)

Either Mr. Peckford cannot read or he is deliberately misleading the people of the province by those ridiculous statements. By deliberately singling out emotional issues such as the denominational education system and the Labrador boundary, he is attempting to stampede Newfoundlanders and Labradorians against the federal government's constitutional proposal. The scare tactics which Mr. Peckford is using are similar to those used by Mr. Lévesque during the Quebec