

*The Constitution*

My leader has stated one matter about which we are adamant. In order for there to be some balance in the government's proposal, a recognition of the right of the provinces to own, control and indirectly tax their resources must be included. To do anything else would be a major disturbance of the status quo. We are talking about bringing the constitution home in a relatively short period of time. It would be a little much to expect that any substantial part of this country would accept a package which does not at least retain the basic rights they have always enjoyed. That demand on the part of my party is absolute. It is non-negotiable, it is a "must-have" demand. Also it is a pre-condition for any further consideration of other items the government wants to see included in this resolution.

I should like to put the resource issue in a somewhat different context by referring to the matter of collective and individual rights. There are those of us in this country who feel that individual rights cannot be enforced and sustained except by real and recognized collective rights and that those rights are a myth. We need the power to deny access to resources, whether that power rests with our communities, with our unions, our band or tribal councils or within our provinces. We need the power and muscle to be able to enforce the individual rights listed in any charter. It is as important a principle applied to resources as it is when applied to individual human rights. Legislation and laws can change, but once people recognize they have certain powers and rights they will not give them up. We do not suggest the government can grant those rights, but it is proper that those basic rights, especially in so far as our provinces are concerned, be recognized. It is one further bulwark against the strength of central government action which we in my part of the country feel we must have if we are to ensure the long-term survival of democratic and open government.

In addition to resources we have many other serious concerns, but I stress again that acceptance of the package rests and is dependent upon the government's acceptance of our prime resource demand. In this regard I would also urge the government to bear in mind the importance to Atlantic Canada and other maritime provinces of offshore resources and some tangible recognition of expanded rights thereto by the provinces concerned. After years of dependency those provinces now see a chance to become masters in their own houses or at least to get a piece of the rock.

We should hope to see very soon some tangible proof that the government recognizes the provincial ownership and right to indirect taxation of resources. The government and government members on the joint committee must show some concrete evidence of bargaining in good faith on other key concerns in the weeks and months to come. We are not stipulating anything, but we insist that there must be some evidence that the committee is not a rubber-stamp for the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) or any cabinet minister. They should listen not only to us but to the official opposition and to the representatives of the provinces. That good faith must be demonstrated in the time that lies immediately ahead.

We are not in a position to judge the receptiveness of the government, but if the package is balanced we intend to support the resolution. Our final decision can only be made on judgment day when the report of the committee is in and the final offer of the government is clear. At that time the final answer can be given.

For all provinces, provincial ability to manage and tax resources is a key part of the confederation bargain. For many provinces, particularly those in the west, resources compensate for the lack of a significant manufacturing industry. Resource proceeds allow provinces the financial ability to help stabilize and diversify their provincial economies and provide the services their people need. With wise management, resources are the key enabling most provinces to obtain a reasonable level of economic stability. But the provincial governments' ability to manage their resources so as to create a more stable economy has, in recent years, been seriously impaired. The rights of the provinces to regulate and tax their natural resources have been reinterpreted by the Supreme Court of Canada. Those judgments have called into serious question the ability of provinces to raise revenues from resources and to regulate the rate of production, especially if those resources are sold outside the provinces concerned. Thus it is necessary to reconfirm jurisdiction to the provinces to manage and develop resources, to allow provinces to levy both direct and indirect taxes, as long as they do not discriminate between provincial residents and other Canadians and to permit provinces to legislate with respect to the export of resources from the provinces. Of course, federal paramountcy in trade and commerce would still be maintained.

● (2140)

In summary, the amendment my party would propose would confirm provincial ownership of resources, would incorporate a clause with respect to indirect taxation and, finally, would incorporate a concurrent power with federal paramountcy with respect to trade and commerce as it affects the export of non-renewable natural resources, forestry products and electricity both in interprovincial and international trade.

But resources are more than this to us, especially those of us from British Columbia and western Canada. Control over our resources is more than a matter of cash and carry or "what we have we hold." The British Columbia energy minister perhaps overstated it the other day. I saw in a column by Marjorie Nichols in the Vancouver *Sun* that:

Mr. McClelland, without blushing, said that resources represent the culture of British Columbia.

That may be a little much—she thought so—and I think it is going a little too far as well. But, if members opposite wish to understand the attachment by the people of the west to their land and resources they should take the opportunity to enjoy some theatre, a play originating in Saskatchewan which toured across the west and which has twice been covered on CBC television. It is a great play entitled "Paper Wheat". That play, people's theatre as it is, outlines not only the growth, complexion and nature of the developing west and the west today, it clearly and dramatically outlines the long and popu-