

portfolio at the territorial level was myself. I have never really come to the conclusion as to whether I should thank the Hon. Member for doing so or whether what should take place is entirely the opposite.

**Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I support the constitutional Accord signed by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and the Premiers of the provinces last week. I believe it is good for Quebec and good for Canada.

I also said that it needed improvements and that I hoped public debate and public hearings involving the participation of Canadians from one end of the country to the other would, over the course of weeks and months, achieve those improvements. I believe the motion before us represents such improvement, and we support that motion.

[*Translation*]

I therefore support the motion moved by the Hon. Member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent). The motion is entirely compatible, to borrow a term from the constitutional Accord, with what members of my Party and I myself have already said on this issue. I am therefore happy to see that the members of the NDP now agree with us in this respect.

[*English*]

I agree with the Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East (Mr. Allmand) who spoke earlier. This motion does not detract from the Meech Lake-Langevin Accord. I agree that the principles of the Meech Lake Accord should remain sacrosanct. There is no reason, however, why every phrase in that agreement should remain sacrosanct or why the First Ministers, the Parliament of Canada, and the legislatures of the provinces should not yield to improvements which can be justified to those respective jurisdictions.

With regard to the admission of new provinces, I have pointed out to the House on more than one occasion that I believe one of the flaws in the constitutional Accord signed by the Prime Minister and the First Ministers is that the eventual admission of Yukon and the Northwest Territories as new provinces is now subject to the unanimous consent of all provincial Governments.

While I agree that existing provinces should indeed have something to say about the admission of new provinces, we should remember, as has been pointed out already in the debate, that this rule did not apply to any current provinces brought into Confederation since 1867.

**Mr. Benjamin:** Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Newfoundland.

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** What about Alberta and Saskatchewan in 1905, Manitoba in 1870, and Newfoundland in 1949?

Therefore, I believe that an exception should be made in the case of Yukon and the Northwest Territories. I believe that they should be governed by the current formula, which would be seven provinces and 50 per cent of the Canadian population.

### *Supply*

Since I was not in the room when the constitutional Accord was reached, I do not know whether it was merely an oversight on the part of the Prime Minister and the Premiers pressing forward to get an agreement. However, as has been pointed out, there is also no provision for consultation with the Territories on the appointment of northern Senators.

We have yet to hear from either the federal or provincial Governments a satisfactory explanation as to why it was that the First Ministers wanted to make it more difficult to admit Yukon and the Northwest Territories as full partners.

The Minister of Justice (Mr. Hnatyshyn) said this morning that it had implications for equalization payments. I do not find that argument at all persuasive.

In the 1982 amendment enshrined in the Constitution, the commitment of all levels of government to regional equality is set forth quite clearly. Does the federal Government really believe that that provision would be weakened or changed because of the admission of new provinces? We do not think so. We are not getting very clear reasoning from the Minister of Justice on what is a very important and indeed a vital issue for northern Canadians.

The Government of Canada was the only Government at the negotiating table to speak for the interests of northern Canadians. I therefore urge the Prime Minister to take the lead with the provincial Premiers in seeking agreement to change that section of the constitutional Accord.

I support the Accord. I support the agreement reached over that marathon session in the Langevin Building despite its flaws because it represents a reaching out to Quebec and to our French-speaking citizens. I also believe we should reach a little further and extend our hand to Canadians living north of the 60th parallel and to our aboriginal peoples as is set forth in this motion.

• (1700)

My colleague, the Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East pointed out earlier that there was some movement from the statement of principles set forth in general terms at Meech Lake to the Accord signed last week in terms of the recognition of aboriginal rights and the multicultural nature of our society. Section 16 of that Accord will bear a good deal of scrutiny, hopefully in this House, in committee and by provincial legislatures. I believe that the Government should capitalize on that good will and bring it a step or two further.

You will know, Mr. Speaker, that I presented a motion to this House, together with the Hon. Member for Cochrane—Superior (Mr. Penner) and the Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East, which sought to correct what we believe to be an historic injustice to the aboriginal peoples of Canada. We sought the support of all Members at that time to recognize in the Constitution the inherent right to self-government of aboriginal Canadians. We also urge the Government of Canada to abandon its insistence that the right