

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 21, 1990.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Speaker: Before recognizing the Honourable Government House Leader, I would like to draw Honourable Members' attention to the loge to my left where we have with us this afternoon Mr. Svend Robinson, the M.P. for Burnaby-Kingsway.

On behalf of all Honourable Members I welcome you here this afternoon.

Also with us this afternoon, seated in the public gallery, from the Northern Nursing and the Bachelor of Social Work Programs, we have 25 adult students, and they are from the constituency of the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

On behalf of all Honourable Members, I welcome you here this afternoon.

In the loge to my right we have with us this afternoon Mr. Joe Borowski, a former MLA of this Legislature.

On behalf of all Honourable Members, I welcome you here this afternoon.

The Honourable Government House Leader.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if there would be agreement to proceed directly to Orders of the Day?

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to proceed directly to Orders of the Day. Agreed? No? Leave is denied.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Prime Minister of Canada Personal Attacks

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupert's Land): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon). In the past couple of days the Prime Minister has personally attacked the Manitoba chiefs and their leader, Phil Fontaine for the position they have taken on the Meech Lake Accord. The chiefs, even though they are not equal partners in any process of Government, listened with courtesy and respect to the Prime Minister. In return they are hit with personal attacks. The Prime Minister has no moral authority to attack aboriginal leaders. Will the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) express to this House his views on the outrageous behaviour of the Prime Minister toward the aboriginal people? -(interjection)-

* (1335)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I am not a lawyer but I am told that is referred to as "leading

the witness." When it comes to taking offence at personal attacks from the Prime Minister, I guess I should begin by suggesting to the chiefs of Manitoba, welcome to the club.

Each of us in our own way who have been involved in the process have expressed our anger and have agonized a good deal about this entire process of constitutional amendment, the negative view that it has created of elected officials, people in positions of responsibility and leadership right across the country. Each of us have, I think, examined our own souls as to what we could have done differently in the process.

Each time I do that, Mr. Speaker, I believe that what we in Manitoba have done has been better than that which has been done right across the country. I believe at all times we have been honest, forthright and direct with people right across the country, whether they be the other First Ministers or whether they be people who have strong views on the constitutional amendment with which we are dealing.

At every time we have told them what our process was in Manitoba. We have told them that in Manitoba we are committed to listening to the people, to having extensive public hearings and to ensuring that the decisions we make by the 57 people in this Legislature are the product of the views and concerns of the people of Manitoba, and that ultimately we will exercise our best judgment, but only after we put in place what is considered to be the most democratic process in this country.

Nobody ought to be criticized for having that process utilized to their best advantage in ensuring that their views and their concerns are being heard and that their rights are being protected as a result of our commitment to the democratic process in Manitoba. I believe that Chief Fontaine and all of the chiefs ought to be extended the courtesy and the support of people in public life to ensure that their rights will continue to be protected by this Legislature and by every other Government in this country, Mr. Speaker.

Aboriginal People Distinct Society

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupert's Land): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the First Minister. Aboriginal peoples are the original nations of this country called Canada, with their own cultures, languages, traditions and institutions. Yet aboriginal peoples are not recognized as distinct societies within the Canadian Constitution.

Will the First Minister inform this House on the measures he will take to guarantee that the distinct societies of aboriginal people are recognized as the most important part of history and reality of Canada?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, when I went to Ottawa to the First Ministers' meeting to negotiate

and try and achieve changes and additions to the Meech Lake Constitutional Accord, one of my foremost commitments was to do two things: firstly, to ensure that Charter rights were protected for all Canadians; and secondly, that we expanded the definition of the fundamental characteristics of this country so that it did indeed accurately reflect what Canada is all about, that first and foremost we are all Canadians, that we have aboriginal origins, history and heritage that ought to be recognized in our Constitution as a fundamental characteristic, and that those fundamental characteristics as well, in addition to our French-English duality and in addition to the distinct society in Quebec, ought to include, in a very generous way, the multicultural fabric of this country.

We worked very diligently and were unable to get unanimous consent, the unanimous consent that was required under the meeting process in which we were engaged in Ottawa, but we did succeed in having our version of the Canada clause that does refer to the aboriginal peoples as a fundamental part of this country, have that referred to a parliamentary process to engage in public hearings across the country so that all Canadians, all aboriginals, all people from whatever walk of life in Canada would have an opportunity to be heard on the establishment of those fundamental characteristics of this country.

* (1340)

A clause to indicate that should be forthcoming from that process under the seven provinces, 50 percent formula. I believe it will happen and I feel that there is support across the country, and I will engage in a very positive way to ensure that our aboriginal heritage is indeed part of those fundamental characteristics.

Territorial Governments Provincial Status

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupert's Land): Yes, my question is to the First Minister. The aboriginal people have respect for institutional democracy. Their governments have always operated in accordance with the basic democratic principles of openness and respect, yet the peoples of the Yukon and the Northwest Territories now have their democratic rights to determine their own future subject to the whims of First Ministers. Only the First Ministers, who are not elected by the peoples of the territories, have the power to decide the question of provincial status of the North.

Could the First Minister tell us whether he agrees with the violation of the democratic rights of the citizens of the two territories, and the action he will take to remove this black mark on Canada's democratic record?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I would like to correct one aspect of the preamble of the question from the Member for Rupert's Land, and that is that he said that only the 11 First Ministers have the right to decide on the various aspects of relationship with the territories that are contained within the constitutional amendment.

I say to him that the process in which we are engaged in Manitoba is evidence of the fact that the 11 First Ministers alone do not have that right. I have never believed that it is a right that any 11 First Ministers should have, that ultimately the decisions that are made on constitutional amendments have to be decisions made by the Legislatures and the Parliament of Canada. That is why we are engaged in this process, that is why we brought back the package of constitutional reforms that we did from Ottawa, that is why Manitoba and its Legislature will have the same right to be heard on that as every other Legislature and to vote on that.

I say to him that those changes that were in Meech Lake, that were not I believe in the best interests of the territories, are ones that still need to be determined and decided upon along with the companion resolution by this Legislature.

I also suggest to him that I have had extensive consultation with Mr. Dennis Patterson, the head of the territorial government in the Northwest Territories, Tony Penikett, the Premier of the Yukon, and those people ultimately, despite their great concerns and reservations, urged acceptance of the package that I along with the other two Party Leaders in this Legislature brought back from Ottawa. That is they said that in their judgment it was better for the country to accept the changes in the companion resolution along with Meech Lake and go on with the process of attempting to keep this country unified and strong again. I believe that their judgment on behalf of the aboriginal people that they represent in those territories should also be considered in our deliberations.

Constitutional Conferences Negotiation Process

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupert's Land): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the First Minister again. Two weeks ago in Ottawa the country witnessed an exercise in constitution-making that should never be repeated. The First Ministers were kept inside a room without windows and subject to incredible pressure tactics of the worst kind in order to get their agreement to a deal. The aboriginal people of this country consider such a process to be the opposite of democratic.

Will the First Minister tell this House his views on this process and assure the people of Manitoba that such violation of openness necessary for any democracy will never happen again?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I am sure the Member for Rupert's Land knows that I am on the record on numerous occasions, including yesterday in introducing the resolutions to the Legislature, as saying that the process was absolutely rotten, that it is no way for any of us to amend constitutions to put in place provisions that will govern our country for a long time in future and to have it the product of such a closed process with all of the attendant pressures, manipulation, and everything else that went on.

One aspect of the outcome that I believe was probably the most positive was that each First Minister from the First Minister on down came out of the process saying

never again, that it shall not happen again, that we amend constitutions or attempt to amend constitutions.

* (1345)

The Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) read from the statement of the Prime Minister as to what he said about the future way in which constitutional reform and amendment will take place.

I have said that I would never again participate in such a process under those kinds of circumstances, that it will be opened up, that it will have opportunity for public hearings and changes before final determinations are voted upon by the Legislatures and the Parliament of this country. I am committed to that, and I am sure that I will have the support of every Member of this Legislature in that endeavour.

Aboriginal Participation

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupertsland): My question is to the First Minister. The events of the past few days have shown to Manitoba and Canada the wisdom, strength and courage of aboriginal peoples. The aboriginal peoples have come together in a tremendous show of solidarity to make their voices count on matters of fundamental principles.

The non-aboriginal population has been listening to aboriginal concerns with understanding and empathy. Perhaps now, as in no other moment in Canadian history, there is a public commitment to readdressing the past wrongs inflicted upon aboriginal peoples and permitting aboriginal peoples to take their rightful place as the first nations of this great country of Canada.

Will the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) tell the House the actions he and his Government will take to respond to the commitment of the public toward making aboriginal peoples full partners in the future of Canada?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Well, Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated before I believe that the companion resolution, with its commitment to once more establishing a process of constitutional meetings to deal solely with aboriginal issues so that we can get on the table issues such as aboriginal self-government, treaty rights and many other things that are of grave concern to the aboriginal peoples and indeed people right across this country.

In that companion resolution there is a commitment to begin that process with the first meeting to be held within a year and with meetings at least every three years thereafter to deal with the separate and distinct and very fundamental concerns of aboriginal people to be addressed not only constitutionally, but in terms of future governance in this country.

I am committed to be a positive part of that process and deliberation. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of Manitoba, on behalf of the Government of Manitoba, to participate in a way that I think is meaningful and that will be of long-term benefit to our aboriginal people and indeed strengthen and unify this country.

Mr. Harper: Mr Speaker, my question is for the First Minister. The Constitution of Canada gives full powers

of Government to the provinces and Parliament, but the aboriginal Governments are not explicitly recognized as full partners in the governing structures of this country.

Will the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) indicate to this House his commitment to constitutional change, which will proclaim in clear words the existence and importance and strength of aboriginal Governments?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is important to recognize our aboriginal history and our aboriginal rights and to ensure that we work to define them in such a way that is acceptable and is also productive for the aboriginal peoples of this country as well as for the entire Canadian fabric, because we are indeed a country that is made up of people of many, many origins, backgrounds, colours and creeds, and we are a strong country because of that tremendous input from people from all origins and all backgrounds.

It is important for us to respect our origins, to respect the historical rights of all those who come to this country or who were our original peoples in this country. I want to work very positively with all other First Leaders and all other Governments to ensure that we establish the kind of framework of which aboriginals can feel proud and secure and of which people right across the country can feel is good for the future growth of our nation.

Aboriginal People Federal Retribution

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupertsland): My question is to the First Minister. Aboriginal peoples have been excluded from the constitution-making process since before Confederation. In the past few days in Manitoba, aboriginal peoples have stood by their principles and opposed a constitutional deal reached without their participation and consent. For their efforts they have received many threats that they will suffer by speaking out and standing by their deeply held beliefs.

Will the First Minister assure this House that he will oppose any punitive action taken by any Government against the aboriginal peoples and outline the efforts he will undertake in his dealings with other Governments to guarantee that punishment is not the reward for principle?

* (1350)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, again I might say with respect, the threats that have been issued regarding aboriginals and regarding the things they might indeed suffer as a result of their actions in Manitoba have probably been no less than those that have been issued to the Government and to various people involved in Government as to just what retributions there might be from other jurisdictions in this country.

I believe that tactic, I believe that approach to Government is wrong and I say to the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper), as I say to anybody in this country, the Government of Canada nor any other

Government is going to get away with threats or in fact application of any sanctions against this province or the aboriginal people for having taken a very democratic and a very principled stand, Mr. Speaker.

Constitutional Affairs Public Hearings

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupertsland): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the First Minister. Manitoba is the only province which gives its citizens the right to present their views about constitutional change at public hearings. In the past few days several federal politicians have stated that Manitoba should shorten or eliminate the hearing process.

Will the First Minister indicate to this House his commitment to the principles of democracy and the public hearing process?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I was very proud to be a part of the Assembly decision that changed our rules to provide for mandatory public hearings. Indeed, many of my colleagues in the Government side of the House as well as many of the colleagues of the New Democratic Party, with whom the Member for Rupertsland sits, were a part of those rule changes that provided for mandatory public hearings.

It is lauded in the Charest report as a process that should be emulated by other Governments in the country. It was cited by the Prime Minister and by several other Premiers as being the process towards which they wanted to move their rules in their jurisdiction, and so I say that any federal officials who suggest that we ought to get rid of the process or short-circuit or subvert it are out of step with the views of people right across the country and they are going in entirely the wrong direction, Mr. Speaker.

Aboriginal Participation

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupertsland): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the First Minister. Only in 1982 did aboriginal peoples have any influence on the constitutional change in this country. At the four constitutional conferences held on aboriginal issues, the aboriginal peoples were present at the invitation of the Prime Minister.

Will the First Minister indicate his support for entrenching the right of aboriginal peoples to attend and participate in the First Ministers' conference?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I indicated yesterday and I have indicated before that the process that was established and arrived at in Ottawa that added a separate stream of constitutional conferences on aboriginal issues calls for the aboriginal people's representatives to be at the table as part of those conferences. I believe that is important. I believe it is important that the aboriginal people ought to be at the table discussing issues that affect them, at particularly the aboriginal constitutional conferences that were established as part of the companion resolution that

I hope will still become a part of our commitments in this country.

Aboriginal Issues

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupertsland): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the First Minister. Senate reform has been discussed by the First Ministers since their very first conference over 100 years ago. In the past few years Senate reform has been a major constitutional issue, especially in the western provinces. The First Ministers have recently agreed to make Senate reform the next top priority in the constitutional discussions. Could the First Minister explain to this House the efforts he will make to convince all the First Ministers that aboriginal people and issues are the top priority and that the first order of business in this country is the aboriginal people?

* (1355)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Well, Mr. Speaker, what I indicated to the Member for Rupertsland was that we have set up a separate series of constitutional conferences for aboriginal issues alone, that that is part of the companion resolution which we brought back from Ottawa as part of our deliberations and that in that respect the aboriginal peoples are given a separate series of constitutional conferences all on their own to deal with the very important and serious issues that affect aboriginal people, whether it be self-government, whether it be treaty rights or any other issues that aboriginal peoples are concerned about. They will have a separate and distinct series of constitutional conferences, at least every three years, the first beginning within one year in order to deal with that matter. That is part of the companion resolution which I brought back from Ottawa.

Economic Growth Aboriginal People

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupertsland): My question is to the First Minister. Many politicians have said that if the Meech Lake Accord does not pass Canadians will suffer dire economic consequences. Aboriginal peoples live with dire economic consequences every day, especially on the reserve and in the core area of Winnipeg. Dire economic circumstances are nothing new for the aboriginal people. Would the First Minister explain to this House the measures he and his Government will be proposing in the immediate future to improve the economic situation of aboriginal persons?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we in Government during the past two years have taken the initiative to develop an urban Native strategy because of our concern to improve the circumstances in which many of our aboriginal people live in urban setting. I know that the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Downey) could give a more complete list, but we have done such things as providing for recreational counsellors in many of our Native communities. We are working with many of the northern communities, including the one in which the Member lives, to provide

hydro directly to the communities to improve the quality of life for them.

Mr. Speaker, I think that it is important that the Member for Rupertsland recognize that the major constitutional responsibility for aboriginal peoples in this country still rests with the federal Government and that it is very important that all of us work together to ensure that the federal Government does not in any way get off the hook on its commitments and responsibilities to the aboriginal peoples in this country, because they are the major funders and they are the people who are mostly responsible for the things upon which aboriginal peoples depend.

Treaty Rights Education

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupertsland): My question is for the First Minister. The treaty right to education is of extreme importance to the future of aboriginal peoples, but the Government of Manitoba and the federal Government have failed to renew agreements to continue the ACCESS programs that provide post-secondary education, particularly to aboriginal students in Winnipeg, Thompson and other locations. Not only are the ACCESS programs in jeopardy, treaty students have not been told that they will no longer receive living allowances from the provincial Government. Will the First Minister tell this House the steps he will take to uphold the treaty right to education, how quickly he will commit to his Government providing long-term educational opportunities for aboriginal students, and how quickly he will ensure that aboriginal students do not face cutbacks of their educational allowances from the ACCESS program?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I think that the Member for Rupertsland should know that, during the recent federal budget just a few months ago, the federal Government reduced its transfers to Manitoba by some \$77 million. In addition to that, they have been going through systematically and cutting back federal cost-shared programming in Manitoba. With respect to the programming to which he refers—BUNTEP, ACCESS, Northern Youth Corps, and many other things, we have not reduced our financial commitment to those programs not one nickel—not one nickel. Our commitments continue to be there. Our dollars continue to be put into those programs. Regrettably, because of the federal cutback, we have done that incidentally, despite getting 77 million less revenue from Ottawa.

* (1400)

We have kept our commitment, Mr. Speaker. We are as angry and upset as the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper) and more so because the federal Government has not been keeping its commitment on these programs that are there for the benefit, for the improvement of the aboriginal peoples. I believe that the greatest investment that we make is the investment that we make in education because it pays long-term dividends over decades and generations, and that is not an area in which cutbacks should occur.

Regrettably, Mr. Speaker, the federal Government has indeed made reductions in that area. I will be happy

to work together with the Member for Rupertsland and any of his aboriginal organizations to try and ensure that we restore those fundings that have in fact been cut. The one-year extension that we got on many of those programs is not enough. We need a long-term commitment to education for our aboriginal peoples in this province, as we do for the education of all people in Manitoba.

Protection

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupertsland): My question is to the First Minister. The history of aboriginal people with the Canadian Government has been one of empty words and broken promises. In particular, the treaties were signed in good faith and have been ignored, scorned and violated by Governments. To the aboriginal peoples treaties are sacred documents. It saddens us deeply that they are treated with such contempt by Governments.

Could the First Minister outline to this House the steps he will take immediately to ensure that the treaties are respected and upheld by his Government and what he will do to persuade all Governments to give effect to their binding obligations with aboriginal peoples?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, on many occasions when questions have been asked of the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) or the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Downey), we have repeated that we will respect treaty rights in this province. We as a Government are committed to respect the rights that are established for all people in this country whether by Constitution, whether by treaty, whether by law. Those rights will be protected, and the aboriginal people, I know, will find a Government that is willing to work with them at all times to ensure that their rights are maintained and protected.

Resource Development

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupertsland): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the First Minister. As the First Minister knows, treaty rights of aboriginal people are extremely important to the future of aboriginal peoples. They are bonds aboriginal peoples have with the past and the promises they have for the future. Treaties, particularly in the northern part of the province, are being violated every day in the interests of what is called resource development. The specific treaty rights to hunt, fish and trap are ignored by the corporations that operate in the North.

Could the Minister tell the House what measures he and his Government will put into place to guarantee that resource development in Manitoba will be consistent with treaty rights and that the aboriginal peoples will be able to participate in the design of resource development to ensure that treaty rights are respected?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we have always said that we prefer to have our Native people in the North involved with resource development. I know that when we negotiated and ultimately signed the

Repar agreement, it was with the participation and ultimate involvement of the northern and Native people as part of that agreement so that they could take full participation and benefit from so many -(interjection)- Mr. Speaker, the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) wants to have the floor. Perhaps we could have him answer the question.

Native Communication Networks Provincial Assistance

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupert's Land): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the First Minister. Communication networks for aboriginal people in their own language is essential to maintain aboriginal communities, culture and identity. Communication programs are also necessary to provide information to non-aboriginal population about the situation and aspiration of aboriginal peoples. Many aboriginal newspapers and radio stations have been the victims of severe federal Government cutbacks. The provincial Government could provide assistance.

Will the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) commit this Government to making aboriginal communications a top priority and indicate the measures he will take immediately to improve communication networks in all aboriginal languages spoken in Manitoba?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, regrettably the issues that the Member for Rupert's Land (Mr. Harper) raises are matters of cutback from Ottawa. I have indicated to him that not only have we been subject to having services and responsibilities that were formally under the federal jurisdiction cut back, but we have also had an overall loss of transfer payments to Manitoba of some \$77 million as a result of this spring's budget. So we get a double whammy in that respect. Not only do we get less money to have programming and services provided in Manitoba, but we get federal programs cut back and we get demands and requests that we fill in the breach with the less money, the \$77 million less money that we have. There is only so much money that we in Manitoba can afford to spend.

We are having people at various levels of Government have tax revolts because too much money is being asked of the same taxpayer. So as much as though we would like to be able to fill in the breach and put more money in to replace the money that is cut back by Ottawa, it is simply not within our capacity to do that, Mr. Speaker. The one thing I can tell him is that with respect to the Native Communications Inc. we have not reduced our commitment and our contribution to that, and we will not because we do believe that they provide a good service that should be maintained.

Native Education Language of Instruction

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupert's Land): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach).

The language of instruction in schools is the most important aspect of educational policy. Language is an inherent part of a person's identity and a fundamental

part of a culture of a people. There are 55 languages spoken by aboriginal peoples in Canada, but they are in danger of being lost forever.

Could the First Minister inform this House about the measures he and his officials are taking to improve the opportunities of aboriginal children to be educated in the language of their people?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, in response to that question I might indicate that the Department of Education and Training has within the department a branch of Native education so that we could ensure that indeed we serve the needs of Native people across this province.

It is indeed acknowledged that there is a lack of resource material in the Native languages across this province. The department and its branch are certainly doing everything they can to ensure that many of the resource materials they have, the library book materials they have, can be translated into the languages of the peoples that we have within this province in the Native communities.

Mr. Speaker, I think the department has moved ahead in that direction. We are now searching for a new director. I can indicate also in our announcement of the high school action plan that was made the day before yesterday, we have acknowledged that there is a need for more involvement of the Native community within the education system. We have acknowledged that we will indeed form an advisory committee made up of Native people across this province to advise Government and to advise this department as to the kinds of needs and programs that need to be developed for Native people in Manitoba.

Aboriginal Rights Supreme Court of Canada

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupert's Land): My question is to the Attorney General (Mr. McCrae). Aboriginal and treaty rights have been protected in a Constitution since 1982. Just this past month the Supreme Court of Canada issued its first judgment on Section 35 of the Constitution. This Sparrow decision has the strength of an eagle.

Will he help build a new relationship between the aboriginal peoples and the Governments of this country? Will the Attorney General inform the House on the measures his department has taken to give effect to the letter and spirit of the Sparrow case?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I believe I said yesterday to the Honourable Member that it is the ongoing policy of the Government of Manitoba to respect the spirit and the letter of judgments rendered by the Supreme Court of Canada. In that connection I believe the Honourable Member and his colleagues and the aboriginal community in our province will be of a great assistance to us as we attempt in the justice system to put in place measures and initiatives which might flow from the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry. I look forward to working with the Honourable Member in that connection.

* (1410)

Treaty Rights Resource Development

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupert's Land): Yes, Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns). The aboriginal peoples have a special and spiritual relationship with the land, land that they have lived on and protected for thousands of years. The treaties that the aboriginal peoples signed with Governments were meant to protect land for aboriginal peoples. Governments have failed to live up to their obligations under the treaties and many aboriginal peoples are still fighting for their land entitlements. Much resource development is taking place in Manitoba without regard to the outstanding land entitlement claims of the aboriginal peoples.

Will the Minister advise this House on the steps he will take to ensure that all resource developments take place without interfering in any way with the land entitlement claims of aboriginal people?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I am aware that there have been a number of areas in the Province of Manitoba that have been designated for consideration with respect to eventual settlement of some of these outstanding land claims. I have consulted with different groups as have other colleagues of mine in Government. In many instances it is a question of bringing these discussions, negotiations to a conclusion. To do that it takes two partners, of course. Some of these claims are bound up in other global negotiations such as those involved in the five communities in the Northern Flood Agreement area. They are part and parcel of an overall set of negotiations that are currently taking place. I simply assure the Honourable Member that we are as anxious as he is to proceed with these claims and resolve those issues.

Northern Communities Transportation Enhancement

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupert's Land): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger). Many, if not most, aboriginal communities are isolated in northern areas of Manitoba far removed from the services and support available in the South and in the cities. Because of the lack of transportation systems, these communities can be reached only by plane which makes the provision of supplies very expensive.

Will the Minister explain to this House the actions he and his department will take to bring these aboriginal citizens within the full transportation system within the Province of Manitoba? What measures will he take to reduce the cost of essential and basic items like milk, bread and gasoline?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to indicate that together with my colleague, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), we have ongoing dialogue in terms of services to be provided for the northern communities in terms of airports, winter roads.

We expanded the winter road system just last year to try and accommodate cheaper prices for the communities. We also realized that a certain amount of responsibility rests with the communities and the federal Government in terms of providing some funding for additional airports, new airports.

Certainly from my Government's perspective and together with my colleague, the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Downey), we have ongoing dialogue with the communities and will continue to do so to try and provide additional services.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT MOTION

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable the First Minister (Mr. Filmon), the Proposed Constitution Amendment, 1987, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Rupert's Land (Mr. Harper). The Honourable Member for Rupert's Land.

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupert's Land): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Cree spoken, translation unavailable)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would ask that the Honourable Member for Rupert's Land provide his translation to Hansard. Would you do that after your speech, please? Thank you. Honourable Member for Rupert's Land.

Mr. Harper: (Cree spoken, translation unavailable)

Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured and privileged to speak in this House and rise on this motion because I have seen and witnessed the desires of my people.

It is about time that we aboriginal people stood up for our rightful place in this Canadian society. We have been excluded in this country for many years, and never have participated in a democratic process in this country. As a matter of fact, the democratic process has denied the aboriginal people for many years to be part of that process.

The governments of this country have ignored aboriginal people for hundreds of years to be part of that process, yet many people in this country who espouse democracy through the democratic process denied them the right to be involved in a democratic process, a fundamental characteristic of freedoms and free countries in this world.

Our relationship with Canada is a national disgrace. It has been a dismal one for the aboriginal people in this country. As a matter of fact, and I keep saying this over and over again, the policies of the Governments have been those of racism, policies of assimilation, policies of integration, policies of genocide. That has been the history of Canada, and it cannot be erased from the history books, the reality that has existed in this country.

We have existed without any written Constitution of Canada, with all those obstacles, with all those policies

of integration, assimilation and genocide. We have persevered, we have not been severed, and I will tell this country we will continue to exist. We will make our place in society. We will be involved in a democratic process of this country. Our cause is just and honourable because what we are fighting for is not necessary for power. What we are fighting for is democracy, democracy for ourselves and democracy for all our Canadians, and we will use the democratic principles in this country to obtain our rightful place in Canada.

* (1420)

That is why aboriginal people have been involved in this process in opposing Meech Lake Accord, and also the process that has been involved in the last while. We do not agree with the tactics used by the Prime Minister and his colleagues, and also by Senator Murray who came in here and told this Legislature to shorten the hearings, to deny the democratic process here in Manitoba which we believe is the best process in Canada. Mr. Murray comes from an institution called the Senate, a non-democratic institution.

Mr. Speaker, the plight of my people has not been heard. It has fallen on deaf ears for many years. In the last while, in the last few days, we have managed to catch the public attention across this country.

In the histories to come, I believe, if we are successful in what we are doing as aboriginal people, that we as aboriginal people are determining the future of Canada and also the constitutional process in the future, a process which is coming to an end, and also a new beginning in which we want to be fully part in this and also recognized as distinct societies and also a fundamental characteristic of this country.

Over the last few days I have said my heart was heavy. There has been tremendous pressure by myself on myself and also by aboriginal leaders in Manitoba. For without them, I would not have been able to stand up to the pressures; and for without them, all the work that we have done—sat together in the afternoons and the evenings to plan out our strategies—this would not have happened. The chiefs and the leaders are representative of the communities of what they want, to uphold their rightful place in the society, to uphold the promises, to uphold the aboriginal rights. The people have spoken in Manitoba with one voice. When I look at the history in terms of what the Government has done to the aboriginal people, one thing is clear, aboriginal people have been very patient, have been the most accommodating people in this country.

The aboriginal people have made the greatest contribution in this country. We have given up our land and our resources so that other people could enjoy the benefits in the great, rich country we call Canada. What price have we paid? What benefits have we received?

We look at the statistics on many of those reserves: poor housing, high unemployment opportunities running as high as 90 percent. Our students are dropping out of high schools. Our conditions are such that we use hospitals' medical services four times than the national average. Our standard of living in those communities

is poor. We have poor roads. You name it, it is disastrous, much worse maybe in some third world countries. I do not think the aboriginal people have bargained for those things. Through kindness and sharing, is that what we are rewarded for, for our generosity?

Governments have not listened, but I appeal to the ordinary Canadians and Manitobans to urge their fellow Canadians, their fellow friends, politicians to uphold the promises that were made to us, the treaty rights, the dignity that we want. We want respect from other people, and I have mentioned about the conditions within the reserves because of the lack of job opportunities, the hopelessness in some of those communities. Our young children do not have recreational facilities. I know in Red Sucker Lake we do not have recreational facilities or a gym, and within those communities there is violence, violent deaths, a high suicide rate amongst our young people. That is being manifested within the reserve because of the lack of opportunities that we have.

We need your help. We aboriginal people have taken our stand across this country. Many leaders have come to Winnipeg for this rally that we are having today, the solidarity day, which I might say was not just planned for today. It has been planned two years ago before that, June 21 is Indian Solidarity Day, and it so happens today is Indian Solidarity Day. It so happens that this is the longest day in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, we are united to meet our objectives. The fight that we are fighting is not with Quebec. We support their aspirations. We support the distinct society. We support the right for them to protect their culture, to be self-determining, a self-government. Those are the very same goals that we as aboriginal people are trying to achieve. We were unable to protect our own culture, our own languages, our own institutions, our own self-government, because we as aboriginal people have never bargained away the right to self-government.

As I mentioned before, the federal Government has determined what our rights, what our participation should be in Canada. We have an Act, an Indian Act, that has shackled Indian people. This human bondage must be done away with. I believe that aboriginal people will some day obtain self-government, but that it is with co-operation from other governments.

We will continue to fight for our own destiny; we were not able to control our own destiny. We have been told that because we do not support Meech Lake that there will be economic consequences, that there will be a backlash, and that Quebec will separate. I do not believe that for a moment, because Quebec's goals are the same goals for aboriginal people. After all, we welcomed them here in Canada through the St. Lawrence River and for that matter other Canadians, immigrants, through the Hudson Bay, down through the Nelson River to Winnipeg, and we even took care of the settlers. If it was not for Chief Peguis, many of the Lord Selkirk settlers may have starved. Also in the West we welcomed people on the West Coast in B.C.

As I mentioned, our fight is not with Quebec. If Quebec is to separate, it is not because English Canada rejected

Meech Lake Accord, but rather the aboriginal people want to have a rightful place in Canadian society. I do not think Quebec has that moral authority to separate from Canada. We have never denied Quebec their rightful place in the Canadian society.

Mr. Speaker, we have a relationship with the Canadian Government, a special relationship, not in a sense that we are a special group of people, not that we are better than any other group of people, but because of the treaties that we have signed with the federal Government. Many of those treaties have not been upheld. Here in Manitoba we have treaty land entitlement that is still outstanding.

When I was Minister I signed the Treaty Land Entitlement Agreement and sent it to the Minister of Indian Affairs. I never got a response from Indian Affairs, from the Minister, until a year later saying that he was not going to proceed with the treaty land entitlement.

There are other promises that were made to Indian people including the right to education. Indian people believe the right to education has been paid for through the treaties, through the land and resources that we signed. Many people, Canadians, do not even know that the Indian people have treaties with the federal Government. There is misunderstanding amongst the Canadians about our rights to education. They think it is free. It is not.

When the Canadian Government cuts back on educational programs, it is violating treaty obligations. They say that the treaty obligations that they have regarding education policies are not treaty rights. That is why I believe the Meech Lake Accord does not really guarantee anything for aboriginal peoples, because we have heard many promises before. Then the Canadian Government says that we have to reduce the deficit and reduce our spending, and yet calls on aboriginal people to dig in their pockets further so that we can pay taxes for the social programs, not only for aboriginal people, but for other Canadian people. The federal Government tries to say to the Canadian people, we are providing education to the Indian people, and we have to cut the costs, and everybody has to share the burden.

* (1430)

We are not asking the Canadian people, through their tax dollars, to pay for our education. The federal Government may say that, because the revenue that they collect through the tax systems they have put into place is paying for our education. Canadian people should realize what we want is the Canadian Government to pay our education through the land and the resources that we gave them, not through the Canadian general public, the revenue that is obtained from them, because I know we need to uphold the social programs for other ordinary Canadians, the handicapped, the women, the poor, because as aboriginal people, our philosophy has been to share the burden with other Canadians. What we have, we share with you. The history of Canada has not been that case.

So we ask Canadian people to share their thoughts and also to share the responsibility the Canadian

Government has. They may, by the way, support us. I know many people have indicated to me that they want to help, and one way is to keep that discussion going on aboriginal rights, to keep the aboriginal issues on the table, to phone their Members of Parliament so that our issues are the top priority, because it is the first order of business that is still outstanding and yet we try to make our case known and we are kept outside looking in. We need to be equal partners. When the treaties were signed we signed in good faith, nation to nation, of recognition that we had our own sovereignty within Canada. We were supposed to live side by side to coexist together, and not one society dominating another.

As I mentioned before, I have been honoured and privileged to be the first Indian, treaty Indian, in the Legislature, for the very first time in the history of Manitoba, but that is not important. What is important is the first citizens, the first nations in this country have not received justice, have not been heard by governments, and for the first time we are being heard in this country. Hopefully, other Canadians will hear us and support us.

I know the Prime Minister sent a letter to us, to the chiefs, a few days ago, hoping that we will support Meech Lake. The chiefs indicated that they were willing to hear the Prime Minister himself or his delegates to see what they had to offer. Of course, the Prime Minister's office sent a delegation to offer us some things which were unacceptable to the Manitoba chiefs, because we have heard it before.

We have been promised from governments as to their intentions as to what they want to do. One of them is they want to invite the chiefs to sit at the constitutional conferences, but we are not really assured whether they would be a voice around those discussions. Another one is that we should define treaties, but the federal Government has that obligation already. If Meech Lake fails they still have that obligation. They still need to define what those treaty rights are.

The other one, of course, is the Royal Commission on Native Affairs on Indian issues. I mean we have been overstudied. We do not need any more studies. The Prime Minister at any time can set up a royal commission if he wants to. He does not need approval of the chiefs. As a matter of fact, he should have shown that leadership if he cares about aboriginal people.

One of the documents is sitting collecting dust in Ottawa, which is called, Study on Indian Self-Government, which is an all-Party House of Commons Committee Report, headed by Penner, often referred to as the Penner report. It was unanimously supported by all the three democratic Parties. Also, it had an ex-officio member. I believe her name was Roberta Jamieson.

So that document was tabled, I believe, I am not quite sure, in 1984, and there were specific recommendations in there respecting aboriginal people, the lands and resources, education, child welfare. The Government has not seen fit to implement some of those policies, and yet the Prime Minister tries to sell us something that we know he is just throwing in trying to appease us.

We have heard it before, but now the aboriginal people have a say in Canada as to what the future should be. I hope that we will have support from all Canadians, because what we are fighting for, as I mentioned before, is democracy. What we have done so far is within our rights, within our own democratic principles. We have not done anything illegal, and we are using your own institutions, your own rules to obtain for aboriginal rights and recognition in this country.

One person mentioned to me, just think if aboriginal people were fighting on an equal level playing field, we would see who wins.

Over the last few days, as I mentioned, I have had tremendous pressure, and I just want to conclude by saying, in the last while I have received many telegrams across this country: from B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, the territories; from non-aboriginal people expressing their support behind us as to what we are doing, telling us to keep on fighting, to stand up for our rights and to fight for democracy. I have also received many telegrams from all the aboriginal organizations in this country supporting fully the position of Manitoba chiefs. Many of them will be here today or are already here at the rally and tonight at the Convention Centre, finally getting together, finally being united, finally speaking with one united voice, finally capturing their concerns across this nation and finally being heard.

I hope the Canadian people will listen seriously to the greatest contributions we made to this country, the positive contributions we made to this country. There is no one group in Canada that can claim that they have made the greatest contribution except the aboriginal people, for the land and resources so the other people may live within Canada. We are a rich country, a wealthy country, but we have not received those benefits.

We are prepared to fight as long as we can. If we sign Meech Lake tomorrow, I do not think conditions will improve. If we sign it in five years time, I am not sure whether anything will improve. We are prepared to live with the consequences of our actions, but I do not believe the Canadian people will support the actions of governments, a backlash from governments against aboriginal people. The disastrous situation in those communities is just horrendous. As one reporter asked me, what disastrous consequences would there be if we do not support Meech Lake? I mentioned, what more disastrous conditions can there exist on reserves as they are now? It cannot get any worse.

We are prepared to live for the rights that we are fighting for. We are prepared to hurt a little. We are prepared to wait 10 years; we are prepared to wait 15 years; we are prepared to wait for 25 years, because we believe in what we are fighting for. We are not interested in short-term solutions. What we are fighting for is for our people, for our children, for the future of our children, for our culture, for our heritage and what we believe in. Most of all we are fighting for our rightful place in Canadian society and also fighting for democracy for aboriginal people and indeed all Canadians. Thank you.

* (1440)

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, as Canadians for nearly 123 years we have been involved in the process of constitutional evolution. It occurs to me that if consensus on constitution making were easy it would be easy because Canada is so homogeneous that we would not need a Constitution to hold us together.

We are not homogeneous, Mr. Speaker. The comments made by the Honourable Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper) bear that out. I know the Honourable Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) would agree that we are not homogeneous, so would the Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr), so would the Premier (Mr. Filmon), the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs), the Honourable Member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), the Member for Roblin-Russell (Mr. Derkach) and you and me. We are not homogeneous, we are diverse.

(Mr. William Chornopyski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

As Canadians we often celebrate that diversity. I suppose my favourite way of celebrating the strength of the diversity of our country is by attending citizenship court ceremonies. That is one of my favourite ways to say I am proud to be a Canadian. I am proud of the people who have decided to join us as Canadians from wherever they come in the world.

Others like to attend Folklorama here in the City of Winnipeg. Many, many Members here, maybe all of them, attend annual Canada Day celebrations on July 1. Brandon is fortunate to be the host city for Tribal Days once a year. It is one of the biggest celebrations held in the City of Brandon. The Ukrainian Festival in Dauphin—and I could go on and on and on throughout Manitoba and throughout our country where we celebrate our diversity.

Today I do not think we are celebrating our diversity, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think we are looking at ourselves and asking ourselves just who we are. We are asking ourselves, are our goals reconcilable? If they are reconcilable what do we want our future as a nation to be? If they are not reconcilable what course or courses will we take as a civilized nation of human beings as we address the future of our children?

In spite of threats, in spite of doomsday scenarios, in spite of the mind-boggling, mind-numbing and shameless tactics used by some politicians, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I still cling to the belief that our country and the wonderful people in it are stronger and have a deeper sense of purpose than all of the pundits and all of the politicians put together.

I think the times surely must have been less complicated in 1795 when William McCrae and Jane Armstrong left Ireland and settled in Canada and shared with the aboriginal people their land and their resources. The McCraes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, settled at Clarendon in Quebec. To this day there are descendants of William and Jane who live in Quebec, but they also live in Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, and I am here to tell you they also reside in Manitoba.

There are also descendants of William and Jane who claim United Empire Loyalist connections in their ancestry. There are also descendants whose heritage is German and Dutch and Spanish and French and English and Scottish and Welsh and Danish and, among many others, American. I mention William and Jane because that is the story of one Canadian's background, but everyone in this Chamber has their own story to tell. Everyone in this country has his or her own story to tell about how it is that they find themselves, where they find themselves or under what circumstances they find themselves in our great country today.

The aboriginal people of course have a story to tell, which is obvious to everyone, that they were here and did indeed welcome my ancestors and continued to welcome people coming to Canada for all the years since. Well, all of these descendants, yours and mine, all of these Canadians, descendants of your forefathers and mine, Mr. Deputy Speaker, lived their lives and witnessed the realities of Canada.

Let us not lose sight of the realities of Canada as we face extremely important issues today. Those realities are strengths. They are not weaknesses. As long as I live, I will believe that the strength of our country is the realities I am about to mention.

One of those realities is that we are all Canadians. Another one, my Aunt Verba reminds me, is that the aboriginal people are the real Canadians. My Aunt Verba was the daughter of charter citizens of Alberta, her grandfather arriving there in 1905. Well, Aunt Verba was the first non-aboriginal baby born in the Sunnybank district to the north of Edmonton. My Aunt Verba refers to the aboriginal people as the real Canadians. She does not call them something else; she calls them the real Canadians.

Another reality of our country is that our country has had its arms open to members of all kinds of cultural and racial backgrounds. We call that our multicultural community. It is a very, very real part of our country as the Members ranged around this room by their very presence can demonstrate. We are English speaking and we are French speaking; we are men, we are women; we are boys and girls; we are farmers and fishermen and women; we are hunters and trappers; we are manufacturers and labourers and businesspeople and homemakers; we are employed people and we are unemployed people; we are sick people and we are well people; we are rich people and we are poor people. We are all human beings and we are all different. So to try to homogenize us would be wrong.

It would be wrong to impose any particular set of values on us as Canadians, but it would be right, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to accommodate the aspirations and the hopes and the dreams that all of us have for those who come after us. If accommodating those dreams and hopes and aspirations is impossible, then we have some pretty important choices to make, but I am one of those who believes it is possible.

* (1450)

I accepted my assignment with the Manitoba Task Force on the Meech Lake Accord for a lot of reasons,

but I think first and foremost because I am a Canadian. I travelled with the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Manitoba delegation to Ottawa on June 3. I took that trip ultimately because I am a Canadian and none of the Members here in this Chamber would be Members of this Chamber if they were not Canadians, but is there anyone left who realizes how much of what we have is owed to the fact that we have lived, our ancestors have lived, and we continue to live in the best country in the world?

We have achieved what we have achieved because of our strengths as a nation, certainly not because of whatever weaknesses, real or perceived, we might have. But having said all that, I have to ask why are there people out there telling other people who love their country and all of the people in it that they are tearing their country apart? In the name of all that is right and good, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I plead with all Canadians, let us now come to our senses.

In 1982 we thought we were mature enough to have our Constitution reside here in our own country even though not every province was signatory to that, and in eight short years since 1982 we have come to the situation we find ourselves in today. I suggest to you that the present impasse, the present situation is not evidence of good stewardship of our constitutional affairs. It is extremely unfortunate, even tragic. If there had been better stewardship, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we would not be squeezed in this vice of fear and intimidation. I say to you and to all Honourable Members, all Manitobans and all Canadians, that our country is too precious to be treated like this.

With respect to the Manitoba Task Force hearings, my role as a Member was to play a part in listening to the people of Manitoba and taking their concerns and building them into a report that could form a basis for the Government of Manitoba to go forward into discussions on the Constitution of Canada. Members of that committee were from all three political Parties in this House and we travelled extensively throughout Manitoba. We heard from Manitobans, all walks of life, over 300 of them. We listened to the people from my own community as well, my community of Brandon, individual citizens, average Canadians, the types of people who are the descendants of the likes of William and Jane McCrae. We listened to all of those people who took a keen interest in the accord and its implications for Canada.

I think the task force exercise was a democratic exercise. I believe that word "democratic" has been used a lot in this debate. I do not think it is trite to use it again and again. Constitutions are indeed the property of the people and the Manitoba exercise demonstrates that we have respect for that principle. The Manitoba Task Force was well-received by other provinces across Canada. Indeed the Charest report goes a long way to meeting many of the conditions, many of the recommendations set down in the task force report. So I say that task force report is and was an accurate reflection of public opinion. It reported at the end of October of last year. There was unanimous support of all the members of the task force, an all-Party consensus. The report pointed out the

weaknesses in Meech Lake and offered positive alternatives, made several recommendations regarding amendments to the Meech Lake Accord including recommendations respecting the so-called Canada clause.

A few minutes ago I talked about all of the things about us that are different, about all of the things about us that are important, and the Canada clause as set out in the Manitoba task force deals with that. Indeed our delegation dealt with that between June 3 and 9 in Ottawa. The task force referred to concerns respecting the distinct society clause in the Meech Lake Accord. It discussed Senate reform; it discussed the importance of a reasonable and realistic amending formula. It did indeed speak about the aboriginal people of our country.

Last, but certainly not least, the task force report talked about the process and the way we do things in our country and the way we change our constitutional arrangements, the way we change the agreement that we as Canadians have about how we want to live together and how we want to be governed, so our Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Manitoba delegation took the concerns of Manitobans to Ottawa. Yes, after those seven difficult days and nights we did not achieve everything set out in the task force report, but we did achieve what we believed was the best possible deal we could achieve for Canada and for the people of Manitoba.

I might observe that while we think what we have in the task force report is fair and reasonable for all of Canada, we do not think it is something we need to ram through or stuff down anybody's throat. We believe that it is a reasonable document for discussions on how we should proceed in the future, in the future evolution of our Constitution.

I could go on for quite awhile, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I realize there are others who want to speak, but I could go on for quite awhile and talk to you about my personal reaction. Other words come to mind in my experience in Ottawa, but it certainly does boil down to what is obviously a flawed process. Seven days behind closed doors is not a good way to involve the public in discussion of our arrangements. The hothouse pressure atmosphere is not conducive to a good result.

* (1500)

That process reminded me of what I had heard over and over and over again on the task force. What I heard over and over and over again was that the process at Meech Lake and the process at Langevin was seriously flawed, and that the pressure cooker atmosphere in that process was unacceptable and undemocratic. What were we doing in Ottawa between June 3 and June 9? We were doing the same thing the people of Manitoba had been complaining about to the task force. Here we were unwitting participants in a process we cannot support, a process we abhor, a process that we say will never happen again, certainly not with our participation. It made us realize, made me realize, how important and how integral to a proper result are public hearings and public involvement in constitution building.

I would like to refer to the document signed by our Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the other First Ministers. I would like to remind you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that on the first page in dealing with the Meech Lake Accord, it says, and I quote, "The Premiers of New Brunswick, Manitoba and Newfoundland undertake to submit the Constitution Amendment, 1987, for appropriate legislative or public consideration and to use every possible effort to achieve decision prior to June 23, 1990." I would suggest to you, that clause says clearly that our Premier and our Opposition Leaders, who played such an important role in coming to this document, that those people, those leaders in our province respect the principles I have just been talking about, about public involvement. They did not go to the point of saying that there will be this decision or that decision; they were not going to come to that decision and sign a paper that said so without consulting the people of Manitoba or the Legislature of Manitoba.

I refer you to another page of the document I have in my hand. I do not have an original so it is not the signed one, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but it has a line for each of the provinces and for Canada for the First Ministers to sign. Beneath the Newfoundland line there is an asterisk setting out the conditions under which Premier Wells was signing the document, and not everybody knows this, but I am going to say it again so that maybe more will. Beside the word "Manitoba" there is an asterisk and beside the asterisk it says "subject to the public hearing process." I think it is fair to point out that what the Premier (Mr. Filmon) signed on behalf of Manitoba was a document that recognized the importance of public involvement here in Manitoba.

I think you can also understand the position the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and I find ourselves in, having to have been part of that process with respect to the companion accord that we have achieved. No one is arguing that the companion accord which accompanies the Meech Lake Accord achieves everything Manitoba wanted, but it does achieve something democratic in regard to a process which sets out a process for the development of a Canada clause which recognizes the important fundamental role played by various segments of our society. It sets out a democratic process for Senate reform. It sets out the possibility that there can be Senate reform. So while no one, not the Leaders of the Parties in this House nor myself, no one is putting forward the document we have in front of you as the "be all and the end all" and perfection. I mean it has been said enough times. We know it is not perfect, but I am here to tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in my view what we have before us is infinitely better than the Meech Lake Accord standing alone and infinitely better than nothing at all.

I put that forward and leave it the issue for this Legislature to make its decision, should that be possible. The way things have been going, mind you, the possibility seems to be fading rather quickly, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I would like just for a moment before I sit down to pay tribute to some people. I have a high regard for the Premier of the Province of Manitoba (Mr. Filmon)

for the way that he has conducted himself throughout this mind numbing exercise.

I gained a new respect, not to say I did not always have some respect for the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs), but I gained a new respect for the Leader of the Opposition in the way she conducted herself under very, very difficult circumstances in that former railway station in Ottawa.

I gained a new respect also, for the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer), because I can tell you and some day the opportunity will present itself, today is not the day to tell you more about my observations and my experiences in Ottawa. They do not speak well of the process that was adopted for that dinner party. You might call the latest package "The Dinner Party Accord." It was one marathon dinner party, I must tell you.

* (1510)

The tribute I pay is hard to put into words because I was there and witnessed so much of what happened and witnessed the strength of character of all three Leaders in this House in Ottawa: the tenacity, the commitment to do what was right for Manitoba, to do what was right as Canadians, and to hold their tempers and not to lose control of their emotions, and to make sure the facts were coming out properly, to make sure that the briefers, as they were called, were not spinning yarns that would adversely affect the future of our people in our country and in our province.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

So I do pay that tribute to all three political Leaders in this House. They fought hard for the best interests of Manitobans, working together, co-operating and supporting, putting politics aside. Both Opposition Leaders, it is an understatement to say, played a meaningful and productive role. So I leave those remarks on the record.

I would like also to say a word about some of the other Members of the Manitoba delegation who do not always get the recognition they deserve. There were people accompanying the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the New Democratic Party, and myself who played a very important support role and I would like to say thank you to those people as well.

I do not think there is any need for me to go into great detail about what is contained in the package, but I do reiterate, Mr. Speaker, that the package contains something better than we had before we went to Ottawa, something better than we would have if we had nothing at all. That is as far as I can go.

I cannot say that what we have represents the ideals that we took with us to Ottawa, but I wonder is it fair for us to impose our ideals on everybody else in the country too? Is that democratic? Is a democratic process in Manitoba imposed on the rest of the country, which perhaps did not indulge in such democratic processes? Is that fair either? I have to say, no, I do not think it is. I think all Canadians need to be involved in the process.

It would have been short-term politically expedient for our Premier and our Party Leaders to have walked away from Ottawa and refused to negotiate further, but I do not think the Manitoba delegation wanted to turn their backs on Canada, or turn their backs on the people of Manitoba for the sake of short-term political expediency.

I am here for the long term, Mr. Speaker. I may not be here as an MLA for the long term, but I am a Canadian for the long term and that is why it was important that the Manitoba delegation not turn away and not turn their backs on an improved arrangement, an arrangement improved from what we had before we went there. We negotiated in good faith. We negotiated from a position of honour and strength, democratic legitimacy, and we returned with the best deal that was possible under the circumstances.

I say to you that I believe Manitoba has more to gain than it has to lose in accepting the Meech Lake Accord and the documents which now accompany it. I must say I have nothing but respect and admiration for the position taken by the Honourable Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper). Many of the things he said today are so true, and all of us need to take the time to recall the point that he and the aboriginal people of Canada are making in the course of this process. It is another thing I think we should never forget. We should never ever forget to refuse to get involved in the kind of process we were involved in again. We should never ever forget the legitimate rights and aspirations of aboriginal people in our country, aboriginal people and other people too. We should never ever forget that we are all in this together. We are all Canadians. I have been an optimistic person for the last number of years, a very optimistic person, and my optimism remains through thick and thin.

So I ask, I do not need to ask, I already have what I am referring to here. I believe what we have in this Legislature is a non-partisan approach to what we are doing. I have to say I appreciate that on behalf of all Canadians and Manitobans. I appreciate that because that is the only way we should approach this kind of negotiation, this kind of important constitutional discussion. I ask everyone to take a close look at what we have before us and use your best judgment, use your conscience, and remember that we are Canadian, and there is much to celebrate about our country.

William and Jane, we owe it to them and their contemporaries, and we owe it to all of those who come after them and all of those who come after those other founders of our nation. Those were the residents of our nation when the rest of us arrived. We owe it to ourselves as a nation to approach this thing in an appropriate and sensitive way, and we owe it to each other to be kind in our deliberations and to remember that what is at stake whether it is the doomsday scenarios that some people are trying to paint or whether it is a difficult period of our history which ultimately we will be able to put behind us. Let us approach our task with that kind of Canadian spirit that has served us for 123 years and which, I hope, will serve us for many, many more generations in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Herold Driedger (Niakwa): Mr. Speaker, we have been presented with apocalyptic predictions about what is going to happen if the Meech Lake Accord survives as we know it and also the same apocalyptic predictions if it does not. For this reason we legislators, our constituents, and the representative groups of our province should have been given adequate time to consider, to reflect, to consult and to debate. Our rules call for this. Our process demands it. We, however, have been denied this by others who have their own agendas.

* (1520)

We have been told: abandon the rules, ram this deal through the House. We have been told: buy into the process of constitutional brinkmanship. Mr. Speaker, a country is not a political back room. A small select elitist group must not be afforded legitimacy by accepting their threats of dire consequences. That is the way of dictatorships. Manitoba cannot, indeed Manitoba will not, submit to this tyranny of Canada's version of Tiananmen Square. We have said we will honour our process, because to do otherwise is to capitulate to terrorism and to be blackmailed into a course of action that we do not want.

Today, outside on our grounds, we have seen the solidarity behind the aboriginal people's demand that Canada finally say yes to them. Their quarrel is not between English Canada and French Canada, between Anglophone and Francophone. They know what it means to aspire for the recognition of their distinctness. Their quarrel is not with Quebec. Their quarrel instead is with us.

We have seen the efforts of one Member in this House to stand up to the flaws in the process, to stand up for his people, because once again, in their view, the aboriginal people of this nation have been put on the back burner of the constitutional agenda. So with the inexorability of the Palestinian intifada he, on behalf of his people, has said, no more; he has said, enough. One voice representing the least advantaged people in our society has said, enough. Like David with his stone, the mighty Goliath has been laid low.

Why, we can ask, has this accord to address Quebec's concerns led them to this point? We have been told that Meech Lake I and Meech Lake II were designed solely to correct a wrong. That wrong was the fact that Quebec was not a signatory to the patriation of the Canada Act in 1982. Quebec was not a willing partner in Canada's constitutional family, but you do not correct one wrong by perpetrating others. These new wrongs are not the wrongs of commission, but wrongs of omission. Commission or omission, a wrong is a wrong. Two wrongs do not make a right. Regardless of how we interpret the companion resolutions dealing with aboriginal constitutional issues, it is still an add-on; it is still an afterthought; it is still a promise.

The Native people of Canada are very conversant with the promises made to them. They were not involved in the process. They have once again been left out of the picture in which they are recognized as being a fundamental element of Canada's definition. They no

longer trust in promises. For this reason they, through the Honourable Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper), have said, enough.

(Mr. Helmut Pankratz, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

We in Canada have tended to be preoccupied with the aspirations of immigrants, whether these were French or English, defined as the two founding peoples of Canada, or the many other immigrants of other nationalities and countries who have come to Canada to make this their land. We have tended not to concern ourselves with the people who were here long before any of the rest of us came to this land.

My comments today, Mr. Acting Speaker, will be on behalf of those, our first people. For Canada, unity has been our thorniest problem. We have faced three distinct challenges, the combination of which makes us unique. The first has been the challenge of living in a northern environment not in a primitive condition, but in an advanced industrial civilization. The second has been to maintain our identity beside the colossus to the south, fearing all the while the erasure of our border both culturally and economically. The third is what concerns us in this House today—the complexity of our culture and its expression in the document that defines our essence, the Constitution of Canada and the amendments proposed to make the Province of Quebec a party to this written expression.

Our nation has been from the very beginning an experiment that might not work. Can the two dominant cultures as expressed by English Canada and French Canada live together and act effectively in a single state? We are constantly searching for some elusive common ground between the two, a single national identity. Outsiders have noted our internal dissension and this tension at the heart of things.

In 1939 Lord Durham wrote, I found two nations warring in the bosom of a single state. In 1967, Charles De Gaulle exclaimed at our centennial celebrations, *Vive le Quebec libre*. We feel our self doubts. Often and perhaps too often we look inward.

* (1530)

In his retirement speech in June 1984, Prime Minister Trudeau described Canada as the country that refuses to die. This comment refers specifically to a struggle against Quebec separatism, but in a more reflective moment his vision of Canada vaulted past the present restrictive *deux nations* of the Meech Lake Accord to an understanding of what is necessary for world peace and social evolution. "Canada," he said, "has found itself approximately 75 years ahead of the rest of the world in the formation of a multinational state." He—and I agree with him—happened to believe that the hope of mankind lies in multinationalism. It is here at this expression of multinationalism that I focus on the problems of the Meech Lake Accord for are we not a multinational society?

Many will argue, as many already have, that new immigrants—those not of the founding French or English stock—came to this country after the fact of Confederation and therefore must accept the status

quo with respect to official languages and the recognition of Quebec's unique position as the defender of our French heritage. However, this view overlooks one very salient feature of our historical development. North America was not an empty land devoid of inhabitants when first discovered by European explorers.

In fact, if we wish to contemplate for a short time the reality of the new world, as it was then called, we find not the empty, savage land as described in our earlier history books but a new world that rivaled the old in its cultural diversity, economic control and domination of the environment. Every known physical environment from the harshest cold or hot desert climates to the luscious tropical lands, from the mountains to the prairies, from the interior to the seashore, both North and South America were peopled and bountifully so. Recent estimates of pre-Columbian North America suggest that the aboriginal population, numbered in the tens of millions, struck down ahead of subsequent settlement by European diseases to which they had no immunity.

What do we know of these aboriginal people? The Maya were the dreamers of the new world. Their conceptions of the universe, their mathematics, their art, their religion rival that of the Greeks. Much of what they knew is lost to us today due to the chauvinism of that age of that discovery. Gold, glory, God—in no particular order of priority—fueled the pirate hordes that descended upon these hapless victims of European expansionism.

The Inca were the Romans of the new world. They succeeded in governing the empire that stretched 6,000 kilometres north to south over some of the harshest terrain in the world. They built roads throughout the Andes that rival engineering works today. Freeze-dried potatoes and other technological achievements placed them ahead of the Europeans who came to conquer. The Aztecs, too, violent and bloodthirsty though they were, have their parallel in the Mongol Hordes that overran much of Asia and ultimately settled down to govern China. Tenochtitlan, the city of gold, which was governed by Montezuma the priest king of the Aztecs, was subsequently destroyed by Cortez in his quest for riches.

These three empires, Mr. Acting Speaker, would have, in their own good time, dominated all of the new world. Their spreading tentacles were already evident when the English, the Dutch and the French landed on the shores of eastern North America. Trade networks joined the diverse cultures. Obsidian from Yellowstone, copper from the Great Lakes and huge conch shells from the Gulf of Mexico were found at Cahokia, a metropolis of some 30,000 people at the junction of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. Thus, the claim of *deux nation* by our French and English founders is absolutely presumptuous do you not think?

Subsequent history sees these vibrant cultures of the aboriginal inhabitants of North America first desperately needed so that the newcomer could survive, then tolerated as Europeans learned the ways of the New World, and then finally displaced when they began to question the wisdom of sharing their land with the

newcomers. They became strangers, people unwanted in their own land.

A Cree legend states that long ago a white man came from across the sea to our land. He spoke to our ancestor who was sitting on a huge log. "Move over," said the white man. Our ancestor moved over a little and the white man sat down on the log. The white man nudged him again and said, "Move over." This happened again and again and again until our ancestor was pushed off the log, and the white man said, "This log is now mine." Our ancestor took off his hat and respectfully asked, "May I sit on a small part of this log?" "No," said the white man, "I am using all of the log, but the stump of the tree is nearby, why do you not sit on it?" Since then, the Indian has been sitting on the very small stump, hoping that the white man would never want it. So goes the legend.

It is this attitude that has permitted the English and French, or the Anglophone and Francophone as they are now called, to indulge themselves in the fantasy of two founding nations. After all, by the time the Indian was sitting on the stump, the log was supporting Europeans only, and so it has remained for many years. Periodically, attempts have been made to bridge the gap between the people on the stump and the people on the log, but the political will to deal honestly with the implications has been lacking.

During the height of the separatist crisis, proponents of Quebec independence argued that Quebec was one of the oldest, if not the oldest, colonized peoples in the world. In the words of Jacques Berque, "They call themselves a colonized people, not, as they believe, for once having been annexed to a foreign crown, but because their coexistence with the other in an environment saturated with the other creates between them and the other a sociological distance which would be abolished if they could escape from this environment."

Is it any wonder then that for Quebec and the Government of Robert Bourassa the distinct society clause of the Meech Lake Accord provides the escape valve through which to vent the pressures of assimilation and Anglo domination? But is a society of our aboriginal people any less distinct? In the constitutional conference on aboriginal issues in March of 1987, the aboriginal people wanted, but did not obtain, the very recognition of distinctness that Quebec obtained five weeks later.

* (1540)

The aboriginal people were the original people in North America. During the 50,000 years they had the Western Hemisphere to themselves, they evolved into tribes and nations of many cultures and languages. No part of the North American continent was left uninhabited. As long as it was possible to make a living, these intrepid people found a way to successfully do so. Their mode of living, their art, and their culture harmonized with the land.

European settlement of Canada would have been next to impossible without their assistance. Considering the distinct society status afforded Quebec, failure to recognize their role and distinct culture as a

fundamental characteristic of Canada is the grossest miscarriage of justice in the Meech Lake Accord. Furthermore, westward expansion in what is now Canada and the United States encountered territory controlled by strong, militaristic tribes of Indians. As a result of these encounters, the Governments of both countries undertook to negotiate with the Native people. Treaties of peace and co-existence were made between Governments and sovereign Native people.

The Governments of Canada and the United States both recognized the precept that these proud warrior tribes controlled the land base. The Indians were masters of their own fate then. They had what is today referred to as self-government. Is it any wonder that today the descendants of those aboriginal people considered their place in Canada as equal in importance to the officially recognized founders of our country?

History is made when arrogant people deliberate without thought about the effect of their deliberations. History is made when arrogant people act out of a self-adopted manifest destiny. History is made when a people assumes for itself the mantle of superiority. History is made when leaders assume that they are in tune with the people they represent. However, as we can clearly see with the benefit of hindsight, history is also made when humble people say, "Enough." History is made when the people demand to be heard. I would have thought we would have learned by now. Oh, to have the simple, uncluttered beliefs of a Jacques Cartier who in 1534 could erect a cross on the shores of the New World and claim the entire land for the King of France. The Native people who must have observed the ritual can be forgiven for thinking it was merely a spiritual ceremony practised by these strangers thankful to have reached their shores.

Little did they know that this simple act would provide the rationale for the usurping of their homeland. Back in the old country, Spain, France, and England were competing for domination. The politics were Machiavellian in their subtleties. Any conflict in Europe spilled over to the new world where the Natives were enlisted to assist one European power or another to either engage in proxy fights or participate in the real thing. Ultimately, North America became the stomping ground of England and France.

The initial success of the English and French in colonization was the direct result of Indian aid, and assistance is conveniently forgotten in everything but the history books where it is usually mentioned as an idyllic sharing. Only when the tide of European expansion began to take on a life of its own did the characterization of indigenous people take on a different note.

Our history books are inundated with stories of Native treachery, torture and cunning. Dollard at Long Sault, Father Brebeuf among the Iroquois, to name but a few, are canonized for the benefit of the impressionable young minds. However, the cruelty, the torture and the deceit perpetrated upon the Natives by the Europeans is conveniently glossed over or forgiven as a momentary excess of zeal.

Historically, the traditions of the Indian people, and later the Metis, have been of dealing with our federal

Government from a position of strength. The former is sovereign people negotiating the sharing of their lands. The latter is a sovereign nation in its own right. It is not the fault of these aboriginal negotiators that the treaties and agreements they agreed to were not upheld in the spirit that they were negotiated. As long as the sun shines and the waters flow lasted only until the ink was dry on the document. Once burned, twice shy, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The aboriginal people cannot be faulted for their objection to the Meech Lake Accord, companion resolutions or no, because aboriginal people fear, and rightfully so, that assurances of future amendments to rectify a flawed document are mouthed only until the required signatures are obtained. After that, it is business as usual, and in this instance they fear past practice will be the guide.

Manitoba itself is a province born in the cauldron of racial and religious strife. In the decades before Confederation, the Canadian West had been a primitive wilderness, challenging, forbidding and empty. It was peopled only by the 10,000 Metis, half-breed descendants of the fur traders, their Indian wives, and by their pure-blooded Indian allies.

Since the early traders had been chiefly French, most of the Metis were part French and part English. In reality, they did not see themselves as part anything. They considered themselves a new people, a nation in their own right and the West belonged to them.

If you will permit a slight historical digression, in order to set the stage. In the 1850s, 1860s, communication by way of Hudson Bay and Minnesota improved and the Red River Settlement, as it was then called, grew.

Soon there was pressure for annexation, Canada or the United States, it did not really matter. This pressure was not lost on the Hudson's Bay Company which controlled the territory. It realized it would have to relinquish its control over Rupertsland or lose it to the Canadians or the Americans. The company chose to sell its vast territory from the Red River to the Rockies to the Canadian Government in the summer of 1869. The date of transfer was to be December 1, 1869, a few months later.

The Metis who happened to live on the land were a proud people, politically conscious and concerned about self-sufficiency. When they became aware of the Hudson Bay-Ottawa deal, they took action.

Since there was a space of time between the sale of the territory and the date of transfer, a period in their view in which no established authority to govern existed, they established their own provisional Government. It was this provisional Government which Macdonald was forced to acknowledge and then deal with in his effort to achieve his dream of a Canada stretching all the way to the Pacific. He needed the Metis who were the only military force on the Prairies capable of resisting the northward pressure of American manifest destiny.

The Manitoba Act was an expression of this need and became a Constitution for the Metis people. The Manitoba Act was a bicultural solution arrived at after

long negotiations between the delegates from the Red River and the Ministers in Ottawa. It embodied the chief provisions of a Metis Bill of Rights, namely self-government for the new province, security for existing land tenure, French language, and separate school guarantees as well as official bilingualism. There was to be a French-English partnership in Manitoba. The Manitoba Act reflected the principles of Metis national aspirations, and this, their objectives and that of Quebec are identical.

Subsequent events, however, proved disastrous for the hopes and dreams of the Metis. First they lost their lands. Then in 1890, by an Act of the provincial Legislature, the denominational schools, which are written into The Manitoba Act to protect both religion and language in a new province, were struck down by the English majority. Once again the emotions of race and religion were involved in a question that was bound up with provincial rights and brought them into conflict with minority claims.

The federal Government had not only the right to disallow the measure, Mr. Acting Speaker, but it had also, under The Manitoba Act, the right to pass remedial legislation. Ottawa, then as now, chose to evade its responsibility to act for national good. It was decided the matter should be tested in the courts in the belief that the Manitoba law should be declared unconstitutional. This was the problem. The Privy Council in England overruled the Supreme Court and declared the provincial law to be valid. How could this be? When Canada was constituted the intentions of the Fathers of Confederation were perfectly clear.

To the south, in the United States, strong constitutional guarantees of States' rights had culminated in the American Civil War. In no way did Canada's Leaders want to duplicate this possibility. In their view the obvious error made by the drafters of the American Constitution was to provide insufficient power for the federal Government.

To avert this problem, Canada's preamble to the division of power between the federal and provincial Governments, in Sections 91 and 92 of the British North America Act was written to be interpreted broadly. Peace, order and good Government was to prevail over any of the enumerated articles in Sections 91 and 92. Little did these framers know that in years to come Section 92 Article 13, Property and civil rights in the Province, would prevail.

The intent was clear. We know that from documents and explanations. The effect was clear. We know that from all the court decisions that interpreted disputes between the federal and provincial jurisdictions according to the strictest legality of the written word. The will and the law of the provinces prevailed. So despite the best intentions of our Fathers of Confederation in Canada legislative power began to flow to the provinces. We see the effect of this today in the inequity that exists between provincial legislative responsibility and the ability of the federal Government to raise revenues.

It is here where aboriginal fears of the effects of the Meech Lake Accord began to crystallize. How will the

court interpret the distinct society clause? Is this term going to apply only to Quebec as proponents of the accord suggest? Is it simply a recognition of Quebec's unique position in Canada, or will it, by virtue of its precise definition, forever exclude our aboriginal people from becoming partners in our Constitution, founders of our country? Remember, the Canada clause in the companion resolution is just a promise. Intent and consequence, as historical interpretation in Canada has clearly demonstrated, are not necessarily the same.

For these reasons we the legislators of this province and this country must be assured that future generations will be able to use the Constitution to achieve their legitimate aspirations. I do not want to see Canada torn apart. I want Canada to be able to achieve its future. I want Quebec to be able to achieve its security within our constitutional framework.

In order to address Quebec's concerns we have permitted ourselves to be blinded to the needs of others. We have permitted restrictions to be written into a constitutional document when clearly the need is to be open ended.

We are told that never again will the unanimity required to address the needs of Quebec be able to be achieved, but then the same argument must be applied to the needs of everyone else. Are the aboriginal people less equal? Are the rights of the smaller provinces less important? Are the needs of the other cultures we value and what we proudly hail as a multi-cultural society less distinct? Is the Charter of Rights and Freedoms less significant?

* (1550)

I believe that we the people of Canada have reached a level of maturity which demands that we be part of the process in drafting the Constitution that defines us. The aboriginal people demand that they be part of the constitutional process of the Constitution that defines us. They wish to see themselves mirrored in the Constitution, as we all wish to see ourselves mirrored in the Constitution.

What we are faced though in the accord has been produced by elitist power brokerage. The aboriginal people have waited too long to be heard, not for them the game of constitutional brinkmanship. The fulminations now emanating from the halls of power in Ottawa are the fulminations of desperate men looking for scapegoats at whose feet can be laid the blame for their arrogant and callous lack of concern for the consultation with the people whose rights and aspirations they have sworn to uphold.

It is time, Mr. Acting Speaker, to allow the people to speak, all of the people, including our indigenous people, the first people. Thank you.

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Monsieur le président, c'est un honneur pour moi de prendre part aujourd'hui à ce débat important; non seulement du fait que la discussion porte sur l'avenir de notre pays, ainsi que de notre destin collectif en tant que Canadiens et Canadiennes, c'est un privilège pour moi aujourd'hui de pouvoir prendre part au débat tumultueux mais,

combien constructif et historique pour la construction de la société canadienne du 21^e siècle.

L'histoire du Manitoba français, l'histoire du peuple métis au Manitoba, ou l'histoire du Manitoba a connu ses origines grâce au courage, aux exploits, et à la tenacité de nos ancêtres qui grâce à leur sens d'ouverture et leur générosité d'esprit ont voulu voir la création du Manitoba comme province, pour qu'une bonne fois pour toutes nos droits puissent être respectés dans la grande confédération canadienne.

J'aimerais donc souligner le souci des trois partis politiques représentés dans cette chambre, à non seulement sauvegarder mais surtout à réitérer le respect du principe fondamental de la démocratie.

Quand bien même certains politiciens d'Ottawa auraient la désobéissance malsaine d'oser essayer de contrôler notre système parlementaire démocratique au Manitoba, le fait de prévoir des audiences publiques afin de consulter la population est un geste qui démontre concrètement notre volonté de faire honneur à la confiance que les Manitobains et les Manitobaines ont mis en nous tous, en nous élisant dans cette chambre le 26 avril 1988.

J'irai même jusqu'à dire, Monsieur le président, que la tenue d'audiences publiques est un refus total d'abuser du pouvoir mis entre nos mains de législateurs et de législatrices par la population manitobaine. Et ce, contrairement aux agissements d'un certain fanfaron que habite actuellement au 24 chemin Sussex et qui, avec ses manières d'agir et ses paroles, aurait vraisemblablement été le sujet d'une autre tragi-comédie de Charlie Chaplin si ce dernier aurait été encore vivant.

Monsieur le président, il est grand temps que Brian Mulroney comprenne le message que, nous les Canadiens et les Canadiennes du Manitoba, nous réfutons ses attitudes de manipulateur d'émotions et nous condamnons son malin plaisir à jouer avec les sentiments patriotiques des Canadiens et des Canadiennes.

Il est également temps, Monsieur le président, que Monsieur Mulroney réalise que nous, les Manitobains et les Manitobaines, nous sommes au-dessus de toutes ces bassesses odieuses d'intimidation. Et plus est, Monsieur le président, nous voulons oublier tous les mauvais souvenirs rattachés à la signature mystérieuse de l'Accord constitutionnel de 1987; je dis mystérieuse car, les négociations ayant été gardées si secrètement, que pour un peu, monsieur le président, on aurait même oublié de nous dire qu'un accord avait été signé.

Donc, monsieur le président ce que nous avons devant nous, est un document qui nous présente les amendements constitutionnels 1990 d'Ottawa.

Hier, certains faits historiques ont été mentionnés et ce, à justes raisons.

Tout d'abord, la Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen en 1789 et le "Bill of Rights" des Etats-Unis d'Amérique déclaré deux années plus tard, ont été en quelque sorte, une certaine étincelle d'avant-gardisme de la Loi constitutionnelle de 1982.

Ensuite, cette proclamation royale de 1982 s'est prouvée être la concrétisation des droits démocratiques de l'être humain de par son existence même au Canada.

En 1976, Monsieur Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, alors président de la République française, écrivait un volume intitulé "Démocratie française". La première phrase de la préface du livre de l'ancien président français se lit ainsi: "Aucune société ne peut vivre sans idéal qui l'inspire ni une connaissance claire des principes qui guident son organisation".

Henri, comte de Paris et héritier de la couronne de France si la monarchie était rétablie déclare lui-même que "Le peuple a le privilège de décider".

Ceci, Monsieur le président pour démontrer, pas seulement l'incapacité, mais surtout l'incapacité de Brian Mulroney à gouverner notre pays. Il nous déclare sans cesse qu'il est soucieux du Canada, qu'il est le petit gars de Baie-Comeau, Québécois à souche irlandaise; à l'entendre, Monsieur le président, il me fait penser au vieux proverbe qui dit "La culture c'est comme la confiture, le moins tu en as, le plus tu l'étales".

(Translation)

Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to take part today in this important debate, not only due to the fact that the discussion deals with the future of our country and with our collective destiny as Canadians, but also because it is a privilege for me today to participate in this tumultuous, but so constructive and historical debate on the building of the Canadian society of the 21st Century.

The history of French Manitoba, the history of the Metis people in Manitoba, and the history of Manitoba began thanks to the courage, exploits and tenacity of our ancestors who, thanks to their spirit of openness and generosity, endeavoured to see Manitoba created as a province so that, once and for all, our rights could be respected in the great Canadian Confederation.

I would like to emphasize the concern felt by the three political parties, not only to uphold but, above all, to reaffirm their respect for the fundamental principle of democracy. Even though some politicians in Ottawa might be so terribly unpleasant as to dare to try to control our democratic parliamentary system in Manitoba, the fact that we are providing for public hearings in order to consult the population is a gesture that concretely demonstrates our willingness to honour the trust that Manitobans placed in us by electing us to this Chamber on April 26, 1988.

I will go so far as to say, Mr. Speaker, that holding the public hearings is a total rejection of abuse of power, the power that we, as legislators, were given by Manitobans and this, despite the machinations of a certain braggart who is currently living at 24 Sussex Drive and who, in the way he acts and speaks, no doubt would have been the subject of another of Charlie Chaplin's tragi-comedies, if Charlie Chaplin were still alive.

Mr. Speaker, it is high time that Brian Mulroney understands the message that we Canadians, and Manitoba Canadians, reject his attitude of manipulating

emotions and that we condemn the malicious pleasure he takes in playing on the patriotic feelings of Canadians.

It is also time, Mr. Speaker, for Mr. Mulroney to realize that we Manitobans rise above all of this odious and base intimidation and, furthermore, we want to forget all of the bad memories related to the mysterious signature of the Constitutional Accord of 1987. I say "mysterious" because the negotiations were kept so secret that it would not have taken much for them to even forget to tell us that an accord had actually been signed.

So, Mr. Speaker, what we have before us is a document that sets forth the Ottawa constitutional amendments of 1990. Yesterday, a number of historical events were mentioned and quite appropriately so. First, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizens in 1789; and the Bill of Rights of the United States of America that was drafted two years later were, in a way, what might be called precursors of the Constitution Act, 1982.

Secondly, the Royal Proclamation of 1982 has proven to be a concrete demonstration of the democratic rights of human beings by its very existence in Canada.

In 1976 Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, who was then President of the French Republic, wrote a work entitled "French Democracy". The first sentence in the preface to the work by the former French President reads as follows: "No society can live without ideals that inspire it, nor without a clear knowledge of the principles that guide its organization."

Henry, Count of Paris, and heir to the French Crown if the monarchy were to be restored, states as well: "It is the people's privilege to decide."

All this, Mr. Speaker, to demonstrate not only the incapacity, but above all the incompetence of Brian Mulroney to govern our country. He tells us incessantly that he is concerned with Canada, that he is the little guy from Baie Comeau, a Quebecois of Irish descent. To hear him talk makes me think of the old proverb which says: "Culture is like marmalade, the less you have the more you spread it."

(Mr. William Chornopyski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

(English)

Allow me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to refer to some comment made recently by Senator Lowell Murray who is obviously Mulroney's "yes" person. Senator Murray, with all due respect, came to Manitoba accompanied by some important people, but, no, the Prime Minister of Canada was not of the party, he had decided that he was not important enough to fly to Manitoba.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when Senator Murray says he does not understand how one single MLA of the Manitoba Legislature can hold the procedures, Senator Murray, by that statement has become a living proof that we need an elected Senate who understands democracy and an effective Senate to fuse down dictatorship.

Le Sénateur Murray a évidemment oublié l'histoire du Manitoba, lorsqu'un seul individu par le nom de Louis Riel il y a plus de 110 ans a refusé lui aussi de se plier aux menaces et à l'exploitation d'un gouvernement central qui refusait de prendre en considération les droits des premiers habitants de notre territoire.

(Translation)

Senator Murray has clearly forgotten Manitoba's history when a single individual by the name of Louis Riel, over 110 years ago, also refused to bend under the threats and the exploitation of a central Government which refused to take into account the rights of the first inhabitants of our territory.

(English)

But I am convinced Senator Murray realizes by now that what he actually wanted to say was "that unanimity rules are undemocratic when it gives a veto right on Canadian Constitution amendments." What Senator Murray has to understand is all Mr. Harper did was to object to bend the rules of the House, not to change the Constitution or an institution of it. Mr. Harper used his democratic right as a Manitoba legislator.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish the founder of Manitoba could be heretoday in this House. Brian Mulroney would crawl under his seat with what I think Louis Riel would tell him.

Furthermore, I understand Mr. Mulroney just introduced a motion in the House of Commons to the effect that we, the Manitoba Legislature, adopt the Meech Lake Accord as originally signed in 1987, and then we will debate about the Ottawa amendments.

In response to this insult to all Manitobans, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ask one question of the Prime Minister: Mr. Mulroney, you say you are a businessman, you say you are a labour negotiator, you say you are a lawyer, you say you are a Canadian, you say a lot of things, can you say, Mr. Mulroney, that if you decide to build a house you are going to get sealed and signed legal services before getting a deal with the architect?

* (1600)

Are you, Mr. Mulroney, smart enough to think that in Manitoba we are so stupid to get our legal papers ready before the plans of the foundation and the structure of the house are settled?

Monsieur le président, mon ami Georges Forest a toujours insisté à ce que tout le monde respecte ce que représente et ce que signifie la constitution du Canada.

Georges Forest aurait pu enseigner à Brian Mulroney le sens juste des valeurs et les vibrations héréditaires de nos ancêtres qui nous donnent cette sincérité patriotique à défendre les droits de l'homme et de la femme au Canada.

Brian Mulroney bafoue les autochtones, bafoue les métis, bafoue les Canadiens-français hors Québec, bafoue les anglophones au Québec, bafoue l'identité

Thursday, June 21, 1990

multiculturelle du Canada, Brian Mulroney est le destructeur de l'unité canadienne. Il le prouve, Monsieur le président, avec l'introduction de la motion à la Chambre des communes dont je parlais tout à l'heure.

Il sait très bien que la personne qui va être élue samedi prochain à Calgary, sera le prochain premier ministre du Canada après les prochaines élections fédérales, et il en a peur!

(Translation)

Mr. Speaker, my friend Georges Forest always insisted that everyone must respect what the Constitution of Canada represents and signifies. Georges Forest could have taught Brian Mulroney the true sense of the hereditary values and resonances of our ancestors which gives us the patriotic sincerity we need to defend the rights of men and of women in Canada.

Brian Mulroney scorns the Natives, scorns the Metis, scorns French Canadians outside of Quebec, scorns the Anglophones in Quebec, scorns the multicultural identity of Canada. Brian Mulroney is the destroyer of Canadian unity. He proved it, Mr. Speaker, with the introduction of the motion before the House of Commons that I referred to a moment ago. He knows very well that the person who is going to be elected this Saturday in Calgary will be the next Prime Minister of Canada after the coming federal elections and he is afraid of that.

(English)

Therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all our Right Honourable friend from Ottawa is trying to do is to use any tactic he can to jam the Liberal Party Convention in Calgary, which is again another sign of his nonrespect of democracy.

In conclusion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to express my fears about Canadian unity. I am now wondering that if this lack of national leadership lasts too long, Canada, as we know it now, will never see the 21st Century.

Straight from the heart, and my constituents call me every day to support the feeling that I hope Quebec will never leave the Canadian family, because if it happens it would be a disaster for Canada.

Even if they do separate, Quebec would then inherit an undesired former Prime Minister whom they will not know what to do with, but would have to keep him. I really believe in our strength and desire to achieve what is right for Canada, what is right for our children.

Pour finir, Monsieur le Président, j'aimerais remercier le chef du Parti libéral au Manitoba, Madame Sharon Carstairs, pour son leadership et pour sa sincérité patriotique, tant envers son pays que sa province.

J'aimerais également reconnaître les efforts du premier ministre Filmon et de Monsieur Gary Doer qui ont su démontrer leur souci commun des Manitobains et des Manitobaines.

En post-scriptum je conclurai, Monsieur le président, en disant que l'unité canadienne doit prioriser l'agenda

parlementaire du Canada et du Manitoba. Aujourd'hui, je déclare solennellement que c'est dans cet esprit que j'ai l'intention de voter, si vote il y a.

En tournant une page de l'histoire, permettez-moi, Monsieur le président, de recommander à Monsieur Mulroney d'agir et vite. Je conclus en disant à Brian Mulroney qu'il doit prouver maintenant qu'il n'est pas opportuniste et qu'il a vraiment le Canada à coeur et que pour cela, il va se rendre à Rideau Hall sans délai et remettre sa démission à Son Excellence le Gouverneur général du Canada.

Ceci est à mon avis, la meilleure chose pour tous les Canadiens et toutes les Canadiennes.

(Translation)

To conclude, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Leader of the Liberal Party of Manitoba, Mrs. Sharon Carstairs, for her leadership and for her patriotic sincerity, both to her country, as well as to her province.

I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of the First Minister, Mr. Filmon, and Mr. Gary Doer who demonstrated their common concern for Manitobans.

As a postscript I will conclude, Mr. Speaker, by saying that Canadian unity must be the priority on Canada's and Manitoba's parliamentary agenda. Today I am solemnly stating that it is in this spirit that I intend to vote, if there is a vote.

In turning a page of history, allow me, Mr. Speaker, to recommend to Mr. Mulroney to act and to do so quickly. I conclude by saying to Brian Mulroney that he must prove now that he is not an opportunist and that he truly does have Canada at heart and that in order to do so he will go straight to Rideau Hall and present his resignation to his Excellency, the Governor General of Canada.

That, in my opinion, is in the best interests of all Canadians. Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this historic debate in the Legislature today on this solidarity day for Native people in this province and country.

I, like others who have spoken before me in this Legislature and in Legislatures across our great country, love my country first. I am a Canadian first, just as our Premier said that he was, and that Manitobans characteristically are. I believe Canadians first, by the very accident of geography and history, that has placed us directly between the East and the West in this country. We must, of necessity, be Canadians first. We tend, as Manitobans, to want a strong central Government committed to fairness across this vast country. As social democrats we, in the New Democratic Party, reject the Mulroney—what I call—anti-vision of our country as displayed in his policies of free trade, erosion of spending powers of the central Government and balkanization of our country, and vetoes in the hands of everyone. That is not the vision that we share for our country.

That is not our vision of Canada and that is why I believe, in contrast to the conclusions drawn by our

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three Leaders and enunciated by the Leader of the Opposition yesterday, that saying "no" to Meech Lake is in fact saying "yes" to Canada. Not the converse, not saying "yes" to Meech Lake is saying "yes" to Canada, I disagree with that. In contrast to that view, I believe that saying "no" to Meech Lake is saying "yes" to Canada.

I believe that Meech Lake would weaken Canada as a nation, but I do not think that the substance of Meech Lake is the real issue. I think that to a large extent is in contrast to a lot of the people who have spoken before me and those that will speak later, although others have said that the process is almost as important an issue. They have always said the substance of the Meech Lake Accord is the main issue.

I differ with that; I believe the process is the issue. To me the question of process is fundamental and supersedes the content or substance of Meech Lake, because the substance is merely a product of the flawed process, the rotten process, as it has been referred to in this House. Since the process is the creation of the Prime Minister, by extrapolation the issue is the Prime Minister. I aim my attack directly at the Prime Minister. I vent my venom at the Prime Minister and I believe all of us in this House should and all Canadians should as well.

The Prime Minister has attempted to manipulate the process throughout from its beginnings. He has shown in my view, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a total disdain and lack of respect for the people of this country—the closed-door meetings at Meech, the not a comma can be changed, not one "t" uncrossed or one "i" undotted from the original document, the lapsing of 33 months before the Charest committee, the committee of the Parliament of Canada that was set up to hear the people of Canada, to hear the public on this important constitutional issue, scandalous delay, and the 35 and a half months before another First Ministers' meeting was called. Those all show his lack of respect for the people of this country, a total disregard for the needs and desires of Manitobans and our Legislature, a total disregard for the democratic process.

* (1610)

The Prime Minister in addition to that has the nerve now to say that he rolled the dice on Canada's future—shame of it all—and the nerve to tell us in Manitoba to move closure on this important national issue, to move closure and not to hear Manitobans in order to save his own skin.

It is the Prime Minister who has contrived and manipulated the constitutional crisis of unity in Canada, I believe and I submit. Ultimately only he, discredited, discarded and disowned by Canadians, can remove the crisis by admitting his role in creating that crisis, by placing the blame squarely on his own shoulders where it rightfully belongs and then resigning.

I speak from the heart on this; I believe he must do this to save the nation. He must sacrifice himself for the nation if he loves this country. Only through that action can he be sure that Canada is saved, and I believe that it will be, because I believe that Quebecers

would see that Canadians, that Manitobans were not saying no to Quebec, not at all. We were saying no to Mulroney, no to his manipulation, no to his disrespect for Canadians, no to his disregard for Manitoba's democratic process in this province and no to his disrespect for the first people of this country, the Native, the aboriginal people. In fact they will understand that we are saying yes to Quebec and yes to Canada.

I am convinced that since this process was so rotten and wrong this time that the results of that rotten process should not be sanctioned by this Legislature. Everyone admits that the process was wrong. Why buy into it now? Why be a part of that rotten process? That is where I depart from the three Leaders of Manitoba's political Parties and the conclusions that they came to. I respect each of them for the difficult decisions they had to make. I respect that, and I respect the circumstances in which they made those decisions.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

I feel awkward a little bit with this one position by all the Leaders. I much more prefer partisan politics, and I do not like this love-in. I have to say that I respect the Leaders, some more than others, but under the circumstances I believe that they had little choice but to say this is the best we could get. They must keep their word and I understand that, but the rest of us have had a chance to stand back and take a clear second look from a distance. I believe we can say clearly that if it is wrong for the future, and they admit it is wrong for the future, it is wrong for now. We should not sanction it in this Legislature. It is wrong, and we know it is wrong.

I want to speak briefly about the aboriginal issues now at this point in time that were so eloquently addressed by my colleague, the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper), a few moments ago in this House, because their omission in the process has been the greatest injustice of this process of all and ultimately Mulroney's Waterloo.

We have the historical reality that the aboriginal people were Canada's first people. We have, as my colleague said, the Member for Rupertsland, Elijah Harper, in his eloquent speech, the national disgrace of Canada in the treatment of the aboriginal people in this country. The fundamental relationship in this country that has been long overlooked in Canada is not between French and English, but it is between Canada's first nation and the visitors, the immigrants who came from abroad to find a new life of hope and freedom in Canada. They came fleeing from poverty, from persecution, under threat of torture, incarceration and death in many cases. They found a land of peace occupied by a people who were peaceful, who were not conquered, but who accommodated the visitors through promises called treaties.

For a hundred years they have suffered for their generosity, the aboriginal people. They have existed largely without hope, without pride. In many ways their spirit was bent, never broken as we have seen today, but nearly broken as many turned to alcohol, social assistance, not by choice but of necessity. That is not what they want, and that is not what they deserve.

Elijah said it so well. They want respect. They want dignity, and they want to be part of the democratic process in this country. That is all they want.

This past week has been an overwhelming one for so many, but none more than our colleague, Elijah Harper, and the aboriginal people of this province and country. I have seen the growth in Elijah, the leadership, the commitment, the emotion, the depth of his feelings and the strength and determination as he has gone down a road that has been very difficult. It would be very difficult for any of us to do. It takes great courage. Through him, I see those same qualities showing through in the faces of the Native people across this country, hearing their voices in interviews and what they feel about what Elijah has done, seeing them here today at this rally and at other occasions where Elijah has spoken. Their great spirit is returning and their hope for the future is growing. Their sense of dignity is growing. It stirs my heart to see it happen and I am so proud that it can happen here in Manitoba.

I cannot help but reflect on the irony of the current situation. The First Ministers dealing the cards, rolling the dice in the back rooms, the big boys, and here it is, one of the players, the aboriginal peoples represented through Elijah, who the big boys thought was not big enough to be in the same room, deciding now the real fate of the Meech Lake Accord, the ultimate in irony. No one, not even one committed to separatism in Quebec, can deny the morality of their cause, the high ground of their cause, and therein lies the salvation of our country. There can be no backlash on the Native people by anyone in Quebec, and if there is any backlash, the Prime Minister's admission of fault and resignation, as I called for earlier, would ensure that Canada's future would be secure.

* (1620)

I want Quebec to know that I want them to be part of this country. I respect the people of Quebec. I want them to be part of the national family and I hope that they will not take this, my negative decision with regard to Meech Lake, as a rejection of Quebec. I hope that they will understand that this is a rejection of what Mulroney has attempted to do with them and us in his manipulation of the process.

If there is a place and a way to accommodate Quebec in the Canadian family as well as accommodating the needs for minorities, the multicultural groups in this country, women, and all those who represent the characteristics of Canada, the fundamental characteristics, the uniqueness of our country, as represented in the Canada clause that Manitoba put forward and that should have been included as part of the accord, I think we can start over again in this country with the Native people as full partners in the discussions, the rights of all of those groups included, and we can go through a responsible, democratic process of consultation and involvement of the people of this country and we can in fact write a Constitution that is acceptable to the vast majority of Canadians. That is what has to happen. It has to happen after the disgraced Prime Minister has left and we can start again with some trust and respect for the process and for the views of all people.

I hope that message will be the one that is sent out across this nation and that the cries of the aboriginal people that we have heard over the last week will be heard and justice will prevail in this great country that would be even stronger as a result of the process that we have undergone. Maybe that is the only saving grace of what we have gone through in the last three years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): Mr. Speaker, the migration of peoples across our Earth over thousands of years has become the basis of our planet's history. These migrations affected the distribution of our ethnic groups and our social institutions. These movements eventually saw groups of people who aspired for common laws, a common purpose, a loyalty. Such migrations determined the extension of our language and our laws and the roots of commerce. Such migrations created some wealth in regions and established poverty in other regions, thus our nations were born. It is this nationality that can be said to be the important element of identification throughout the world.

Although as Canadians we usually do not express our nationality and our national pride with the rah, rah and bigger is better notion that our Americans to the south do, we express a manner that is a quiet expression of loyalty and pride. Even the celebration of our nation's birthday, Canada Day, makes observers pale in comparison to the special events and the glitter with which the Fourth of July celebrations in the United States are celebrated.

Canadians are by nature modest in their expression of national pride and patriotism but when we travel to other parts of the globe we carry our national dreams, our national pride and our citizens are identified throughout the world as being very privileged to belong to this country we call Canada. It is our quiet sense of national pride that has seen us through a political history which marked the development of an identity as a nation, which marked the formation of philosophies and visions of how Canada should be. It is this sense of national pride, it is this belief of a vision in Canada that makes it imperative that people stand up and express their thoughts, their feelings and their concerns about their own Constitution.

On this accord known as Meech Lake and the accompanying amendments which were agreed to by 11 First Ministers in Ottawa on June 9, 1990, it is important that we hear from Manitobans and Canadians. For these discussions and debates which will be recorded in history they will express aboriginal views, women's views, ethnic views, views and ideas of all Canadians from all walks of life, from all socioeconomic segments of society and from all races, creeds and religions. It is time that infamous moment in Canadian history where 11 men emerged from seven days of Canadian drama be discussed by us openly and honestly.

As we in this House debate this accord and companion resolutions we are cognizant of the fact that it will be equally important that the people of Manitoba have an opportunity to speak their mind, to present their views, their issues, their thoughts through

public hearings. Now each politician in this Legislative Assembly comes to a time in their political career where a decision must be made about Canada's future. There is no question in my mind that I abhor the process that our Constitution has emerged from over the past three years. Constitutions are made for the people, not for elitist politicians behind closed doors.

When Mr. Mulroney gathered the 10 First Ministers together for a dinner meeting, he had deliberately planned a strategy of psychological warfare, coercion, cajoling, intimidation, trying to unbalance the people in that room for seven days. He deliberately had a strategy aimed at achieving his predetermined results. That result, the identical Meech Lake Accord with few changes, and perhaps a series of companion resolutions, was to give the illusion of compromise and movement on the part of the federal Government and the pro-Meech provinces.

This man whom we must call Prime Minister, for he was duly re-elected in 1988, is a man with no principles, no morals, and sets for the country an agenda which is his own selfish, narrow-minded view of Canada. I say view of Canada, not vision of Canada, for to me the phrase "vision of Canada" connotes unity, unselfishness, strength, commitment to one contentment. Mr. Mulroney does not believe in these ideals as a vision of Canada.

Fortunately over the next few months and years most of the stories will be told about how Mulroney orchestrated his desired results, how he blackmailed the Premiers, beat down two strong men, the Premier of Newfoundland (Mr. Wells) and the Premier of Manitoba (Mr. Filmon). Those stories will be recorded in history and it will be a black mark on the history books. Those two Premiers did their best. With the support of the Liberal Leader of the Opposition Party (Mrs. Carstairs) and the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer), a tough fight was fought. We did not win, but we came home wiser for the experience.

Did Manitoba, did Canada gain anything from this recent agreement? Very little, I would suggest. The aboriginal people gained nothing. They have been told yet once again, you must wait.

The Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper) has proudly represented the feelings of thousands of aboriginal people across Canada, and thousands of non-aboriginal people, when his lone voice in the Manitoba Legislature stood up to Brian Mulroney and said no. He spoke eloquently here today and expressed the thoughts, the feelings of his people.

The Chiefs from the Assembly of Nations spoke with our caucus a few days ago, and their passion, their eloquence, touched every one of the MLAs in that room. There really is not an argument that one can use to dispute what the first people are saying, because how can we as white politicians begin to say that we know what is best for the aboriginal people. We cannot say that. As my Leader said yesterday, we have not walked in their moccasins. They know what is best and they have spoken their mind.

* (1630)

A friend of mine who is an aboriginal woman shared with me about a year ago about how people conceive the meaning of our Canadian flag. She said we have the colour of the flag, the white, which represents one of the four races of humankind. It can also mean the north direction and it also signifies strength. Also, we have the colour red, which again is one of the four races of humankind. It can mean the east direction and the rising sun. It can stand for woman and for love and compassion, for a new beginning and for birth.

Then we have the maple leaf in the middle of the flag. This is one of the most important trees to the Anishinabe. It provides the sap for the sugar for warmth through the cold winter months. It provides the material to produce the colour purple and this leaf, the maple leaf, comes from a very strong tree. She said to me that there were many things that you could symbolize from the Canadian flag and she was saying, and those words ring true with me today, it could be saying that the future of Canada lies in the strength, love and compassion of Anishinabe women who when given a chance can bring about a new beginning for the Anishinabe people and once again aid the white man. Perhaps this time once again the Anishinabe men and women have aided the white man by standing up for principles felt so strongly by so many Canadians.

These resolutions accompanying the Meech Lake Accord still present to myself and to others concerns about Charter rights. I know they present concerns to the three Leaders as well who brought this agreement home. Women have always argued that the distinct society clause will affect Charter rights. Recent legal opinions on this subject further confirm that fear. It is important that every individual in Canadian society should be seen to be equal. That basic right must be reflected in our Constitution if our Constitution is to truly reflect and represent the people. There should never be a situation where parts of the accord present infringements to individual rights. There is no question in my mind that I believe that Quebec is a distinct society. I also believe our first peoples are a distinct society as well, but there is nothing in the accord that should surpass or infringe on individual rights and freedoms.

Although women have gained something with the sexual equality amendment, the question I ask myself is, is that enough? Should we be accepting that? When social scientists and historians define nationalism, some see this as a concept of groupings of people who share a common culture and who share similar traditions and values. These people understand each other through a common language. Co-operation is then seen as possible. Canada is unique in that it stands apart from that definition. We see ourselves as a nation of differences; that is our strength, not our weakness.

Canada as a nation advocates cultural pluralism. The nation was built on the toil and sweat of men and women who came from many different countries around the world. They came to Canada to build a new home, to build a better way of life. In recent decades Canada has become a nation where immigrants from many of the Third World countries seek this country for their home.

In an era where ethnic differences are assuming greater prominence and where race relations are front and centre in the global community, it becomes incumbent upon Governments and nations to face the challenges inherent in the integration of ethnic individuals into societies. Canada is built upon the principle of multiculturalism. We in Canada are proud that we believe in a strong Canada where people of all ethnic and religious backgrounds are integrated into society, not assimilated into society as we have seen occur in the United States. In the United States language, culture and traditions are lost in the mainstream of the American way of life.

As William Blake wrote in the 18th century, "Nations are destroyed or flourish in proportion as their poetry, painting and music are destroyed or flourish." Has the multicultural fabric of Canada been reflected in the accord? I say no. I believe our three Leaders believe that it has not been reflected as it should be in the present accord.

So there is no question that there are many key issues that are not addressed in these resolutions satisfactorily. We know that spending power provisions, immigration policies and more have not been dealt with. My Leader referred to the matter yesterday. The Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak) has been known to be eloquent on the need to maintain federal spending powers.

The question for each of us in this Assembly becomes a question of conscience. We have been given a free vote on this issue. As my colleague from St. Johns spoke eloquently yesterday, each of us must decide what factors we will consider in reaching a final decision. We will all weigh the pros and the cons. I must ask myself, and I am a Canadian first and a Manitoban second, will Canada break up if this accord is not passed? Will Quebec feel once again so isolated from the rest of this country that they will feel a need to look at separatism as an option? Are we to believe that Canada as we know it today will break up if this accord is not passed? Are we to believe that Canada as a country will be destroyed if any Legislature, by following its due process, and as a result an expression of these regulatory procedural rights inherent in the legislative traditions fails to pass the accord? Are we to believe that Canada will be destroyed if the people of this country who have strong concerns express their opinions?

Then my question is, who wants this accord? Is it the people of the country or is it some politicians, and if so, who are we representing, ourselves or the people?

In Manitoba, many people, many of my constituents have serious concerns about this accord and companion resolutions, as do I. Some constituents have said vote "yes" for the accord. The opinions do vary. What does our noble Prime Minister say, and I note for Hansard the sarcasm in the word "noble." He says, invoke closure. He says, pass the accord and hold public hearings later. We know what is important to the Prime Minister. It is the me, Mulroney agenda. Is that democracy? We cannot and we will not muzzle the people of Manitoba. We cannot and we will not ignore their opinions.

Manitobans and Canadians will be heard and when the deadline passes and the process is not completed,

then who is responsible? Not the people of Manitoba, not Newfoundland, not the Legislature of Manitoba nor the House of Assembly in Newfoundland. Who is responsible? The eleventh hour man himself, Brian Mulroney. He has orchestrated, staged, and acted out every scene and now he has to present himself to the curtain call to the people of this country. As he stands there to take his call, I hope he is introspective and he asks himself, where is the applause? One of his numerous stagehands will have to gently nudge him and remind him, Mr. Mulroney, you are the eleventh hour man.

I was at a special occasion last week, June 15, where 38 Manitobans celebrated becoming Canadian citizens. I watched and I listened as 38 men and women pledged their allegiance to my country and to their country, Canada. Pride in our country and nationalism evokes emotion in all of us at different times and at different moments in our life. During one moment of the ceremony a group of Filipino men and women regaled the audience with a patriotic Filipino song and then proceeded to a patriotic Canadian song. As these men and women sang of their adopted country, the words certainly brought tears to my eyes and to many of the audience.

The words that they spoke, and I still have difficulty saying them today, were the words of "This Land" and I know a few Members of the Legislature were at that ceremony—my colleague, the Minister for Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson), and my colleague, the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), my colleague, the Member for Logan (Ms. Hemphill)—and they spoke of this land from sea to sea and how important it was. They were very powerful words listening to those people who came from another country to make Canada their home.

* (1640)

As I sat and listened to those words as we were in the midst of this struggle in our own minds and in this Legislature, I thought, yes, this is a difficult struggle, this is a difficult decision for me and it is a difficult decision for Canada. I felt very torn that evening. I know the accord is flawed. I know many of my constituents are compelling me to vote against the accord. Do I as an individual have the right to take a risk that Canada will not fall apart if I vote no? I do not really believe that Canada will fall apart in my heart. I believe that our country is stronger than that but I do not have a crystal ball, I cannot see into the future. Should I really take that risk? The struggle continues.

To myself and to my colleagues in the Legislature and to all Manitobans and to all Canadians I say, this above all, to thine own self be true.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if there would be agreement to sit past six o'clock?

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to go past six o'clock?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by saying that I for one will be very happy to see this accord die in this Legislature. I served notice to my constituency executive back in January-February of 1988 when the NDP was still a majority Government in this province and I signaled my intention at that time to vote against the accord if and when it came for a vote in the Legislature. The last interview that I did on the matter was with Geoff York of the Globe and Mail and this was after the election of 1988. I reiterated at that time my intention to follow through with that action. Following that interview in the interests of caucus solidarity I refrained from making any further public pronouncements on the Meech Lake Accord while it was being handled by the Manitoba All-Party Task Force Report. A very good job was done by that committee I might add.

Now it is time to break that silence and deal with some of the reasons that I will be voting against the accord. One of the major reasons and flaws that I have seen and understood to be part of this accord has been the decentralization that I see as part of it. The Meech Lake Accord, along with the Free Trade Agreements, I believe will lead to a further decentralization of power and the eventual balkanization of the country. This will lead to provinces acting more and more as independent entities which will then lead to a shift to north-south thinking and that has been happening over the last few years in any event and in trade patterns.

I believe that this will lead over a few years to the eventual annexation of Canada by the United States. I believe that this is all consistent with Brian Mulroney's U.S. branch plant mentality. I think that they feel the free trade deal and the Meech Lake Accord are part and parcel of the same thing.

Mr. Speaker, the spending power provision is of great concern to me as well and to my colleague, the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), because we feel that it will allow provinces to opt out of future national programs and basically handle their own programs. Now, we understand that those programs are supposed to conform to national objectives, but there is some question there as to whether or not we would be able to successfully develop a truly national program such as we had with the national Medicare program. For example, I know that this particular reference is to future national programs and one that was promised was a national day care program. I believe that under this system we would have a very difficult time getting a national day care program implemented in Canada under this Meech Lake Accord.

(Mr. William Chornopyski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very sick of all the talk about what a miracle it was to get these First Ministers to agree to Meech Lake in the first place. What I would like to know is what is so difficult about getting a group of people—and I guess it is tantamount to having a gang of bank robbers getting together to

split the loot. The irony is that the bank manager had joined the robbers. How could the Premiers refuse the deal when offered vetoes over constitutional changes, the right to recommend Senate appointments, and the right to recommend judges appointments?

It was like almost a Christmas come early for these particular gentlemen of the day. They felt they were home free until some new players entered the scene and refused to pass the accord. Because you have to remember that at that time little was known of Meech Lake and it was assumed that the First Ministers would come back to their Legislatures and ram these things through as quickly as possible. Of course, history intervened and a couple of Governments were changed and so people had a breathing space in order then to take a second look at this accord.

Now, the Prime Minister had at least two clear years to get a further agreement, but he did nothing. He let the time go by. Month after month, we would sit back and wonder when he was going to do something to try to solve this impasse, but he did nothing, and of course, as history has proven, it is really consistent with the way he has operated his whole adult life. He treats these negotiations as labour negotiations. You know he did this with the Free Trade deal. It was a last-minute brinkmanship again that pulled that one off. But the fact that he would brag about it was the worst sin that he could have done, and I think that he is going to live to regret—well, certainly he has lived to regret that—and here is what he says about that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. He said: I told them when it would be. I told them a month ago when we were going to meet. It is like an election campaign. You count backward. I said, that is the day we are going to roll the dice.

So, meanwhile, we were sitting back here thinking that perhaps this man had a busy schedule and it was going to be very difficult for him to arrange his schedule, and all along he had planned it this way. So he is in a very, very poor position now when he comes to us and demands—and I say demands because that is what he is doing—demands that we should somehow abrogate the rules that we have here in this Legislature to accommodate him because he has made a big mistake. He has got no one to blame but himself, and it is about time he took responsibility for that. He also said, and I believe the Leader of the Opposition alluded to it yesterday, where she read from an article in which the Prime Minister was chased coming out of this week-long endurance test that he went through. He said that in the future any and all constitutional changes would be done through public consultation and every last living, breathing Tory, or any Canadian citizen for that matter, would have the right to appear before a public hearing process and have some input.

* (1650)

That was only three or four days ago. Now as late as yesterday, in desperation, he is suggesting that somehow we should dispense with the procedures that we have developed here, get rid of the public hearings and ram it through, as he says.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are dealing with basically an alley cat in Ottawa. He does not have really a very

good sense of what is right and what is wrong. I think inadvertently we are teaching him a lesson here, and I do not like this because this is not the way this measure should be resolved. I do not personally believe that we should be resolving this by way of the rules. I believe we should be resolving it by way of a free vote in this Legislature. I have said that all along, but under the circumstances sometimes when you are with an alley cat you have to fight like an alley cat I suppose.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people are sick of Mulroney's callous disregard for the truth. Back in 1983 I believe he said that we would not have anything to do with free trade. Within a couple of years he was bringing it in. In 1988 he promised a national day care program. Where is the national day care program? In 1989 he won his majority Government and reneged on all of the promises, claiming the deficit is too high. Once again, last week he promised full open future constitutional proceedings, and now he wants us to ram this through the House.

He has a long history, as most of us know—and most of knew before the 1988 election, too, and it is funny how he managed to fool enough people into voting for him again, even with the record that was known about how he kept his promises up to that point. He promised that social programs would be a sacred trust. What has he done since then? He has made changes to the UIC program. He has de-indexed senior citizens' pensions. He has cut back spending on health and education. So much for the sacred trust.

As one of the Government Members suggested to me today that somehow this man could win a third term, I find that hard to believe. Given that he managed to win a second term, that was shocking.

There is no time at this late date to renegotiate this Meech Lake Accord. This accord is dead, and I believe that—in fact I have never believed in the sanctity of June 23. We have been told for months and months and months now that if something was not done by June 23 Quebec would separate, the whole economy would fall apart, the dollar would fall—perhaps it should a little bit, but not as much as they are suggesting—and that this was going to be a terrible event come June 23 if we did not knuckle under and do what he wanted us to do.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have always believed that the proper course of action here was to resist the pressure and in fact that it was time to drain the lake and start over some time down the road, maybe in the fall, maybe next year sometime, and start over with a fresh approach and perhaps a few new faces in the process would be a big help.

Now with the happenings of this past week it seems very clear to me that when and if new constitutional proceedings are to take place, the Native peoples of this country should be included as full partners in that process, not sitting across the street in some hotel as was the case last week in Ottawa. It is time to open that process up to involve all Canadians, to have proper public hearings, not just in Manitoba because we recognize that Manitoba has probably the best system, the best process in the country for dealing with

constitutional changes, but that perhaps all of the provinces in Canada should have a similar public hearings process or a variation of that.

Just days after Mulroney promised this open process he and Senator Murray now want us to change the rules and ram it through. I think that is the height of hypocrisy, yet it is the classic central Canadian view against the regions and that is the view that the regions really do not matter. We all know that in any Party leadership, no matter whether it is the NDP or the Liberals or the Conservatives, when there is a leadership convention the candidates outside of Toronto or Montreal are always referred to as regional candidates. I mean, Lloyd Axworthy went through this in the past six months as well.

For example, our high national interest rate policy which is killing the West is there to cure an overheated Ontario economy. Now where is the offset to the West for this devastation? The PM is up to other tricks. He bullies the Manitoba Leaders and then he blames us if we do not break our own rules. He is suggesting, I believe—and Elijah has made reference to it—that in fact the Natives will be punished through reduced grants. Manitoba, it has been suggested, will be punished if we do not go along with this agreement. In fact, I would suggest to you that Manitoba has already been punished. I do not know that we can be punished any more than we have been.

ERDA agreements have not been renewed, I am told, in the last year or two. Business is putting on pressure. They had been a great ally of Mulroney in the past when it came to the signing of the free trade deal, but they are also involved in here to a certain extent on the Meech Lake Accord. In fact, a Newfoundland businessman was seen putting pressure on Clyde Wells last week because he was suggesting that somehow if we alienated the federal Government they might slow down Hibernia. They might not pump in as much money into Hibernia any more.

Here in Manitoba, of course, I believe the Premier or the Premier's Office has been told that Quebec companies may hold back on investments in Manitoba as a sort of a lever to get Manitoba to push more strongly to adopt the Meech Lake Accord, so we will be punished like bad children, I suppose, but what else can they take away from us? There is not a lot left.

I have said many times that I do not like killing this deal this way with procedures. I would have preferred to have an open vote. Perhaps if Mulroney extends the deadline that is what may in fact happen that we will kill it the proper way through an open vote. However, having said that, what has changed it all for me in the last week was the rightness of Elijah Harper's position. I heartily endorse everything that he did and offered to help in any possible way that I could so that he could achieve his desired ends and that is to kill this accord through the process that we have followed here.

The aboriginal people have been exploited in this country for centuries. We conquered them; we lied to them; we cheated them; and now we want them to stand on the corner until we ask them to speak. We want them to take a number and line up at the

constitutional trough to be added in when we see fit. I think this is an outrageous notion. It is about time we redress this treatment. In fact, did you know that the Government of Canada only gave the Native people the vote as late as 1958? That is just incredible.

* (1700)

We have committed tremendous atrocities on the Native communities. We forced them on reservations which were often the poorest land in the area. Most of us are quite aware of that. In fact, South Africa borrowed their apartheid system from Canada in the 1920s. Canada, and rightly so, has been condemning and taking action against sanctions against South Africa, but while our federal Government and Joe Clark has been doing the admirable thing and fighting the apartheid in South Africa, he is really ignoring what is happening here to our own people in our own country, a system that was patterned and borrowed from Canada in the 1920s to start with.

We tried to assimilate the Natives by tearing the families apart, by sending the children to residential schools. We polluted their environment. There are many examples of that, the Winnipeg River. Personally, I am quite aware of the English Wabigoon River system, which was polluted to the extent that in the '60s they had to close down the tourism business in that area which put Native guides out of work, put fishermen out of work. I do not think that area has yet recovered in the last 20 years from where it was put, because of the pulp plants and so on in, I believe it was Dryden.

We cannot keep putting off the aboriginal people any longer. I have a three-year-old nephew at St. Theresa Pt. and I want him to be recognized in the Constitution. I want him to grow up to be given the same opportunities that my three-year-old son has.

It has always bothered me that English and French are viewed as the founding races in this country, as if the Natives did not exist at all. It is about time they were recognized as a distinct society. When the new round of talks begins in the fall the Native peoples must be included in the talks. Land claims must be settled. Native self-government must be addressed.

The position of Canada's aboriginals has deteriorated over the years. I might say that while I was born in Sioux Lookout, Ontario, a little town in Ontario, I lived in a place called Kawa (phonetic) and no one has ever heard of that town, but it was about 49 miles west of Armstrong, Ontario. That is quite a ways out there. There were six—I believe it was six—males in the community: two Native trappers and four CNR crew members, most of whom were Native. It varied because people moved back and forth constantly in there. At any given time perhaps three of the four were Natives. I am told that the foreman was always white, but my dad claims that people always got along, because they were all in the bush together and they had the same standard of living. They had the same type of houses—we had cook stoves. In those days the Natives picked blueberries, trapped, and fished in that area. Now the next town further down was a town called Collins some 22 miles away west of Armstrong, and it had about

100 Native people living there, a store, and a post office run by a white man.

But, as you got closer to the larger centres, there was more evidence of blatant racism. The Native students—and I am quite aware of this and I am sure many of you are too—were streamed into occupational courses, such as mechanics and home economics. I do not recall personally any Native students who were ever streamed into university entrance in those days in the early '70s and late '60s. The Natives were sent to reform schools and prisons by the thousands. The living conditions are, in many respects, Third World on many reserves, with outdoor toilets and substandard housing, and, in some cases, telephones are a luxury.

So there comes a time when someone has to say no. Elijah Harper said that. He put his foot down and he killed this bad accord. The aboriginal people should be proud of what they have accomplished in the past week. Life for many aboriginals cannot get much worse than it already is, and threats by Brian Mulroney ring hollow. The aboriginal people have served notice that they will not be ignored any more; they must be dealt with as equals in the next round of constitutional discussions.

In conclusion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there does not seem to be any question where the people in my constituency stand with respect to this issue. I know that there are some other MLAs who sent out questionnaires to their constituents. I am certain that they are getting results coming in, but in three days of results I have a briefcase that I cannot close any more with surveys that are opposed to the accord and I have a little pouch of 22 or 23 surveys where people are in favour of the accord. As a matter of fact, after four days, my totals are something like 558 against the accord and 39 in favour of it. It is fairly clear that at least the people in my area support my stand to do whatever is possible to kill this accord. Thank you very much.

Mr. Mark Minenko (Seven Oaks): Mr. Deputy Speaker, a scribe once set quill to paper and wrote: It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. It is the best of times because all Canadians, but most importantly the Prime Minister and the First Ministers of the other provinces, have seen the willingness of our constituents, of all Manitobans to participate in the democratic process. With over 3,000 Manitobans wishing to speak about their desires for the Canadian Constitution, the democratic process is alive and well in our province.

It is the worst of times, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because every day we hear and read about what the Prime Minister of Canada will do to this group, to that group, what new Machiavellian techniques is Brian Mulroney to introduce into our process in the next 24 hours. The Prime Minister of this country has unfortunately manipulated the whole process of the evolution of the Canadian Constitution. This document which enunciates this nation's fundamental values and common goals shall never reflect the values of Brian Mulroney, as most recently seen in his words and actions these last three weeks.

In November 1989 an article appeared in *The Economist* with the title, "The Meech Lake Monster."

With this article, as you indeed see, the Prime Minister's picture appeared with it with the caption reading, "Mulroney has seen it." Looking back over the events of the last several months, it is interesting to speculate at what or whom was this title, "The Meech Lake Monster," directed.

Mike Pearson, in his farewell speech to the Liberal Party on April 4, 1968, stated that, "For a hundred years, in good times and bad, in war and peace, Canadians have worked together to build this big and beautiful land. We have combined our efforts, linked together our overlapping loyalties, composed our differences, shared the happiness of our common achievements. Canada is our country; it belongs to us all and we belong to it."

I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it is indeed incumbent on us all in this process of constitutional reform to perhaps reflect on those comments said some 22 years ago.

As a Canadian of Ukrainian descent I have become well aware of the contribution that many people have made to Canada. This contribution, from the aboriginal people to those new Canadians that my colleague, the Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray), has referred to in her comments, have all contributed to making Canada what it is today.

* (1710)

Over the last 14 years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have had an unique opportunity to better understand Canada and Canadians and this is as a reserve officer in the Canadian Armed Forces Medical Services. Through my various training I had an opportunity to visit many parts of Canada—really, Mr. Deputy Speaker, from coast to coast, having conducted training in Nova Scotia right through to Vancouver Island. Not only did I have a chance to visit these parts of Canada, to perhaps better appreciate what this land, Canada, means to us all, and in particular means to the people in these various provinces and regions, I have had an opportunity to spend time, to speak, to bunk with people from Cape Breton, people from Saskatchewan, people from Montreal, people from Victoria, and over a period of time of days and weeks of the training, opportunity to speak to them about their desires, their interests, their concerns not only for their own province, but for our country, Canada. I feel in some way this has indeed contributed to my development as perhaps a Canadian who understands this country in ways that perhaps Brian Mulroney is not quite sure he understands this country as well.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Last year while I was in the Ottawa area, I had the opportunity of visiting Meech Lake, the site where 11 First Ministers of this nation sat down some three years ago to decide how they wished to reform the Constitution of our nation, the document that reflects, or should reflect, the values and aspirations of all citizens.

Although not necessarily permitted to visit the site of the actual agreement, I certainly had the opportunity

to wander about and to wade out into the water of Meech Lake and reach down to pick up a little memento, say of that location in Canada. When I reached down to pick up a rock from the bottom of Meech Lake, anticipating a piece of granite or sandstone or something along that line, Mr. Speaker, to my surprise I picked up a piece of concrete. I found that was indeed very interesting that instead of finding indeed a rock in Meech Lake, a piece of concrete, a conglomerate of various materials that over time do indeed fall apart.

Mr. Speaker, I think we have seen that certainly the process has perhaps led us almost to that point where we saw night after night on television the situation, the atmosphere and the circumstances that the Leaders of the three Parties of this Legislature underwent with the Premier of the Province of Newfoundland in order to get them to agree to a document that indeed many Canadians and many Manitobans had great concerns about.

Mr. Speaker, when we look to the process, this is not a new problem that was brought to the attention of the Prime Minister. Certainly Sharon Carstairs, the lone Liberal in 1987, raised many of the concerns. Shortly after the Meech Lake Accord was signed, the Canadian Ethnocultural Council, in a letter dated May 15, 1987, wrote to the Prime Minister saying, while we want to have Quebec sign the overall agreement soon, we feel that there should be a national and open debate of at least three months before the final accord is signed.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that with the number of people who have registered in Manitoba to speak to express their views on the Meech Lake Accord here in Manitoba the process would indeed take probably more than three months.

In a presentation by the National Association of Japanese Canadians to the special joint committee, they wrote that the Constitution is too important a document to be hastily pushed through the legislative procedures. We recommend that there be another meeting of the First Ministers at which the results of these hearings should be taken into account.

"We feel also," write the National Association of Japanese Canadians, "that the democratic spirit of our Constitution would be best served by an explicit recognition of the opinions of those Canadian citizens who are appearing before these hearings."

The Ukrainian-Canadian committee, in a presentation to the same committee, wrote that the Constitution is too important a document to be left just in the hands of an all-night meeting of 11 men. A major weakness of the accord is the lack of public input.

Mr. Speaker, when the Manitoba Legislature, through its rules, set out exactly what Canadians as represented by these groups and many hundreds of other groups that made presentations before the committee wrote, when we, as part of our rules, are prepared to listen to Manitobans, representatives of the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister himself hasten to comment that, let us disregard this advice, speed the process through, do exactly that which the National Association of Japanese Canadians said do not do.

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They write and I must repeat once again, Mr. Speaker, and perhaps the Prime Minister would care to listen this time, the Constitution is too important a document to be hastily pushed through the legislative procedures.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I would just like to add that these debates are not the end of the process of constitutional reform. They are but the sober second thought that was missing from the process as manipulated by the Prime Minister of this country. I call on all Manitobans and all Canadians to take this opportunity to sit back over the next several months, review the events that have transpired, and then with renewed vigour and enthusiasm begin the process of constitutional reform with a view to making this country, our Canada, a better nation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Maureen Hemphill (Logan): Mr. Speaker, the Meech Lake debate is one of the most difficult and one of the most important discussions that has been forced on the Canadian people and its representatives. I use the word "force" because I believe that the crisis of conscience that we all feel so heavily was completely manufactured by an insensitive, uncaring, and manipulative Prime Minister who believes that coercion, browbeating, and brinkmanship are acceptable tools to determine the nature of our country and its people. It is not.

All of us in this Chamber and all of the people in Canada have a right to be angry about a process that forces us to make an impossible choice between our country and its people, a choice that is no choice because it asks us to choose between the unity of our country and the equality of our people. Regardless of the position that we have taken in this debate, or regardless of what Party we are in, I want to say that I believe that everybody in this Chamber is fighting both for Quebec, they are fighting for the unity of our country, they are fighting for our aboriginal people, our multicultural people, and women.

* (1720)

We must not let the dreadful process divide us or suggest that we are separating because we are not. We are united in speaking out and speaking for and standing for all of those issues. The only person that we all need to separate from in this country is Brian Mulroney, and I for one refuse to let him divide us from Quebec or from each other.

As agonizing as this is for all of us, it is giving us an opportunity to learn about Canadian people, Mr. Speaker, especially our aboriginal people, as the nation watches their peaceful and democratic battle that they fight not just for themselves but they fight for all Canadians. The people of Canada support this courageous stand led by their elected and their natural leader, the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper).

They are speaking to Brian Mulroney and the Canadian people with their hearts and they are saying no, no, no, no. No, we cannot wait any longer for you to fulfill the broken promises of hundreds of years. No, to more meetings, more talk and more study. They have literally and figuratively been studied to death.

No, to the lack of recognition for the aboriginal people as the founding people of our country. No, to poor housing, poor sanitation. No, to more poor medical care, and no, to inadequate opportunities for training, education and jobs.

I do not think any of us can understand really that Elijah and his people have done a good job of increasing our understanding these days, but the despair and hopelessness that comes from a proud and independent people who see their young committing suicide at alarming rates, who see the unacceptable levels of mortality rates of babies, who live in communities with 90 percent unemployment that forces their young people off reserves into the city which greets them once again with slum housing, no training and no jobs. Where can they go? They are saying no to a biased and unfair justice system that contains little or no justice for the Native people.

The aboriginal people are 7 percent of our general population and 54 percent of the provincial jail population, Mr. Speaker. They have a higher rate of guilty pleas and findings. They end up in jail because they are poor and they cannot pay the fines for minor municipal and provincial offences. They are more likely to be arrested and charged with an offence than non-Natives. They are less likely to get a full parole and they are more likely to be returned to prison for a technical violation. Nowhere are the inequities and the discrimination more evident than they are in our legal justice system. Most of all, the aboriginal people are saying no to dependency and no to a lack of participation in Canadian life whether it is our education system, our justice system or our child welfare system.

Nothing is as important to the aboriginal people in the continuance of their culture as the care and nurturing of their children which is seen to be a responsibility of the extended community and something that we could learn from, as there are many things that we could learn from the aboriginal people.

They have a generation of Native youth that have grown up without the support or the knowledge of their culture and their language because of the loss of 4,000 Native children removed from their homes through the adoption program. This and the continued separation of Native children from their families and their community through the present, still inappropriate child welfare system is a form of cultural genocide.

The National Indian Brotherhood states that unless a child learns about the forces which shaped him or her, the history of their people, their values and customs, he or she will never know himself or herself or his or her potential as a human being.

In a recent meeting with my caucus, Chief Peter YellowQuill from Long Plains came in with a Union Jack over his arm and with medals from the Second World War. He probably said the same to us as he said to the other caucuses. He said, you were hungry and we fed you; you needed skills to survive in this land and we taught you. Now it is your turn.

Mr. Speaker, the Native people speak softly and they do not carry a big stick. The words that they say and

the words of Elijah today I think touched the hearts of us all, as did the words of a Native woman who said, we shared our land with you and I am sorry that we did. Those words and the words of the chairman of the Human Rights Commission when he said that our treatment of our aboriginal people is a national disgrace are harsh words for Canadians to hear. We have to not only hear those words, but we have to act as individual MLAs, as caucuses, as Parties, as Governments and as the Canadian people. The Canadian people feel that your cause is just. Our Governments then must realize this and they have to find ways to change the provincial and the national agenda to reflect the reasonable request of the aboriginal people and the willingness of the Canadian people to right the wrongs. The time for justice is not tomorrow, it is now.

Mr. Speaker, what about the other half of our population in Manitoba or one-third of the population in Canada that belongs to the ethnocultural communities, people from all countries in the world sharing the title Canadian? They have come here because they are tortured, because they are oppressed or because they see Canada as a haven and a land of freedom. We open our doors to them because we have the land, we have the resources and we have the heart.

We also open our doors to them because we need them. We depend on immigration to build our country, to fuel our economy and to fill our shrinking workforce. What kind of a life do they live? What kind of treatment do they receive when they come to Canada? Do we help them adjust to new customs and language? Do we accept the skills and training and education from other countries? Do we stand up and fight against discrimination and racism? Are we serious about eliminating the systemic discrimination that exists in our Governments and our institutions? Do their children have a chance for a higher education, and if they do can they get a job in their field?

I believe there are many myths about the impact of immigration on our economy and our country. Myth No. 1 is that immigrants take jobs away from Canadians. They do not; they create jobs. Myth No. 2 two is that immigrants drain the economy; they stimulate the economy in many ways; that they contribute to increased unemployment rates and that they do not pay taxes. The fact is immigrants participate in the labour force at rates comparable to those of native Canadians and have unemployment rates below those of the Canadian born. So we must make sure that we are not perpetrating their myths that are affecting the attitudes and the feelings of our Canadian people to continue to open our doors to people from all lands, not just because they want to come here, but because we are going to need them even more in the future.

* (1730)

The nature of the Canadian population is changing here as it is in North America. We have more elderly. I hate to say this, but we have a declining white male population, so we will have to make sure that we give full appreciation to all of those that we have because

there is going to be a lot fewer of you in the future. We have the declining whites, more elderly who will not be working, more Natives, more immigrants, especially visible minorities. When you add to that single parents, women and handicapped, you have large pools of unemployed people from which we must get our work force in the near future if we are to survive economically.

We have to begin now to find ways to deal with the systemic discrimination and barriers that are keeping so many Canadians out of the work force and keeping them in a life of poverty and dependence. That is our Native people; that is our immigrant people; and that is women and our disabled. We need them and now is the time to start with training, education and job opportunities. Business, industry and governments will have to begin the process of change now to welcome the work force that they will be dependent upon within the next decade. It is so clear that we need each other, Mr. Speaker, and that Canada needs all of its people to be equal partners culturally, socially, and economically.

It is so clear, too, that we want Quebec to stay with us and we want a united Canada. When I was the Minister of Education, I was really proud to be able to approve the first all-Francophone high school in the Province of Manitoba. It was not easy. There was a lot of controversy about it at the time, a lot of discussion and concern. They said nobody will want to go. It is going to be a white elephant. It is a lot of wasted money. Nobody is going to want to go to an all-Francophone high school. It was filled almost immediately, and it has been working so successfully.

I support the Francophone people in and out of Quebec with everything they need to do to maintain their culture. I believe they should have their own school board. I believe they should be able to look after their own schools, and that they can do it better than we can, and that they can make sure that they are retaining their language and their culture by being in control and not having us in control. I believe that they are a very distinct society, so I say to the people of Quebec, do not let this undemocratic constitutional process alienate you from the Canadian people because we are with you.

We have to look at the role of women. As the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylcia-Leis) said so well, if women had been in charge, this might not have happened.-(interjection)- She did. She said it would not have happened. I see I am at least getting support from the other two females of the Legislature. But we make up over half the work force. We are still the backbone of the family. We have women who are working for careers which is their right, not a privilege, but most women are working to put bread on the table and a roof over the heads of their children. Many are the sole support, and, tragically, more and more of our young women are joining the growing legions of single-parent mothers.

In the inner city, one in three mothers with children from the ages of five to 18 are single parents. They are alone; they are uneducated; they have no jobs; they have no training. We are dooming them just like our society dooms our Native people to a life of poverty and dependency. What about disabled women? They

call it double jeopardy, with almost little or no hope of being allowed to be independent and to be productive. What about the growing number of food banks and the growing number of largely women and children who are lining up to be fed? The common thing that they all have is that they are poor. It is unacceptable that a rich and a peaceful country—we are not spending our money on wars—you know, we are rich. We have the resources; we are a peaceful country like Canada. Why can we not feed our children? It does not matter why, we are all to blame. We cannot afford the social costs of a generation of deprived children and mothers, and women are entitled to a better deal, and it starts with constitutional recognition and rights.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say a couple of words about the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper) and I notice that we are calling him Elijah Harper. We are naming him in this Legislature without people really noticing it. I told him he was becoming a legend in his own time and he said, no, just a legend in his own mind. We know the characteristics that Elijah is demonstrating are the characteristics of the aboriginal people and that they have shown great pride, great courage, tremendous patience and an excellent humour. I do not know if any of you noticed when Elijah was being interviewed one day, he said, "Well, if they are going to break up the country, we are going to take it back." There is just that kind of soft spoken way of making points that I think is so effective. Have you ever heard the phrase "an angel in disguise," I said to Elijah, to the Member for Rupertsland. That is a great disguise, Elijah, because he is truly becoming a hero for his people and for the people of Canada.

I just want to close by saying a couple of things. One is that I have been very proud to stand up with Elijah and with the aboriginal people, that if this constitutional amendment ever did come to a vote that it has been my very difficult decision, as it is for everybody in this Chamber, to vote against the accord, because it is wrong for the aboriginal peoples, it is wrong for the multicultural people, it is wrong for women and I believe that the Quebec people will understand that this is not a rejection of them, that we do want them with us, and they are not going to allow this terrible process to separate us.

So I salute the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper) and the incredible job that his people have done standing up for themselves, but as is clearly shown and felt by the people of Canada that they are standing up for them too. How many people have you heard say, is it not ironic that our Native people, who have been kept down for so long, are the ones that are standing up and speaking, not just for themselves but for me because I am a woman, for me because I come from a multicultural community and I think that is a tremendous statement about the morality of the decision that they have taken.

Just one final point to make once again, Mr. Speaker. I just want to say that I think our Leaders, all the Leaders did an incredible job, and if there is one common feeling out in our province now, it is great pride in the job that was done by the Leaders and in the co-operation that they showed. I think that we are—well, as was said by

some of them, they may not be too comfortable with it all the time and we may have to go back to some partisanship, and they clearly showed that there are times when you have to set that aside.

So I believe that everybody in this Chamber—I believe our Leaders were a credit to their Parties and to our province and our country and I believe that everybody in this Chamber, regardless of the position they are taking or what they say in this debate, truly is standing up for Quebec, for a united Canada, for our aboriginal people, our multicultural people and women. We are all in this together, and I am very proud to be in it with all of you.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a privilege to be able to stand here today and say a few words on such a historic moment. I did want to start off by making reference to something that my leader had pointed out when she had quoted the Prime Minister of our country. In essence, what she was quoting the Prime Minister in saying was the importance of our Constitution and the need to ensure that we have adequate public input. Because the Constitution is for the people, it is important, it is crucial that it is made from the people.

We have witnessed in the past couple weeks the complete opposite of what the Prime Minister was saying not only six, seven years ago but as late as two or three weeks ago, Mr. Speaker. We have on one side, if you will, if we put a spectrum on constitutional reform of a referendum of sorts, and then on the other hand a closed door or a closed meeting. That is what we witnessed. We have witnessed something as far as I am concerned—and I am sure all of my colleagues in this Chamber are concerned—is something that is completely unacceptable, something that should never, ever happen again.

Many of us have very strong opinions on our Constitution and no one more so, Mr. Speaker, than the Leader of the official Opposition, who has stood up right from the beginning.

* (1740)

The Prime Minister's timing is something that I question. He had decided intentionally to wait for the last minute. He knew what he was doing, and as he himself has said, he was rolling the dice. Mr. Speaker, we are running out of time. Manitoba's process dictates that we have to have public input, as well we should have public input. The Prime Minister was well aware of that fact that we had to have public input, but he chose in his wisdom or lack thereof not to allow Manitoba the opportunity to bring forward to our public what the First Ministers came up with. It insults me greatly to find that we now have Members of the Conservative Government in Ottawa and, in particular, Senator Murray from Ottawa telling Manitoba that maybe we should usurp our rules and form, or invoke some type of closure in order to pass the Meech Lake Accord.

Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister is serious and he believes strongly for our country, he should be seeking

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an extension of sorts, because with 3,500 presenters on the list, mathematically, it is impossible for us to hear them. It is time that the Prime Minister take some action. The tactics that we have witnessed in the past couple weeks, again, I would sum up by saying were unethical. We saw blackmailing; we saw phone taping, something that I would not expect to see at such a high level of a conference. It was disappointing not only to myself, but I believe to all Canadians the methods that were used in order to try and get the Premier of Newfoundland and the three leaders here in Manitoba onside.

Mr. Speaker, we have to ask, how did the Meech Lake Accord ever come into being? In 1984 we had the current Prime Minister say to Quebec that he wants to bring Quebec into the Constitution. Quebec has always been a part of our Constitution. In 1987 he gathered the First Ministers in a room in a union style. He brought the Ministers together and came up with an agreement, an agreement that was developed in a short period of time in a hot air atmosphere.

I would like to pay a special tribute to my Leader, who was at the time after Meech Lake was actually signed, from all the 11 First Ministers back in '87 the only elected Opposition Leader or Government Leader across Canada who spoke and gave her concerns about the Meech Lake Accord. It was at that time a very unpopular thing to do. Our Leader, the Member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs), had very strong convictions and did not think twice whether it was at a Liberal function at which time many Liberals were against or for the Meech Lake Accord. She stuck to her principles and she fought for what she believed in and quickly, it did not take long, our Party did adopt what Sharon was pointing out as flaws that needed to be addressed.

Mr. Speaker, then in 1988 we had an election at which time it was quoted that my Leader had made the statement that Meech Lake was dead. At that time I believe it was important for the then current federal Government to recognize, as an official Opposition in a minority Government, that there is something wrong with the Meech Lake Accord, that at least we should be listening to what people are saying in Manitoba. By December of 1988 all three Parties and a majority of Manitobans were concerned about the Meech Lake Accord and all on side in terms of the three political Parties and, as I say, a majority of Manitobans.

We had a task force which went to all regions of Manitoba and heard from all Manitobans. Throughout those hearings what it did was it allowed Manitobans the opportunity to say what they would like to see in the Constitution. Mr. Speaker, we heard from Manitobans what they felt was important to them, what they felt the three Leaders in Manitoba should be saying to Ottawa. They brought up the amending formula. In Western Canada and the Atlantic provinces there is a sincere effort to try and get an elected Senate. We felt that with the clause in the amending formula to get an elected Senate it was next to impossible, so we sought to change that. Manitobans said in a very strong way that the amending formula needed to be changed.

We had concerns, Mr. Speaker, about the fundamental freedoms. We wanted to ensure that the Charter of

Rights was supreme, that the rights of all individuals would be treated equally, that whether you are male, female, no matter what ethnic background or race you might be, as a Canadian we are all equals. That is the way it should be, Mr. Speaker. That is what we, as Manitobans, as a united front in terms of the three political parties, were fighting for.

The distinct society clause is something that I know many people in Quebec want. No one argues the fact that Quebec is a distinct society, but there are more distinct aspects of Canada that we believe are necessary to have in the Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, we have witnessed in the last two weeks the need to have our aboriginal people put into the Constitution. We have seen that our first nation in Canada was in fact our aboriginal people, then came the English, then came the French.

It has not stopped there. We have had immigrants throughout Canada's history coming to Canada. That is one of the reasons why we feel that not only should we be concentrating on the French, English and the aboriginals but in the Canada clause we feel that it is essential that we take into account multiculturalism. Canada started off with aboriginals. Our future is going to be all about multiculturalism. I believe, as many Manitobans believe, that it is essential that we get a Canada clause enshrined into the Constitution.

* (1750)

Mr. Speaker, I was at the Philippine Centre and witnessed the swearing-in ceremonies of 38 new Filipinos. One of the things that was very moving not only to the new Canadians but also to everyone that was participating was when they started to sing the song, "This Land is Your Land, This Land is My Land." It was a good feeling.

Whether you live in Quebec, whether you live in Manitoba, the land is ours. This is something that we should fight for. In fact, thousands of Canadians have fought for what Canada is today. Many of those people who did fight on our behalf, did fight for Canada, want us to ensure that Canada in the long term will remain, and to ensure that what we do is what is responsible.

I can say, Mr. Speaker, I have stated to my constituents that have called me that I will remain uncommitted until I hear from all of my constituents, or as many of my constituents as possible. I think it is crucial that I hear from the public input. We have public hearings, and to make a decision at this time would be premature.- (interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lamoureux: I think it is also essential that I listen to what my colleagues, and in particular the Leader of my Party, has to say about the Meech Lake Accord and the companion resolutions.

Another concern that many Manitobans share about the Meech Lake Accord is the opting-out clause. This is a clause that I believe is not in Canada's best interest. This is a clause that can lead to different levels of

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services across the land. I like to think that whether you live in Newfoundland, Quebec, B.C. or Manitoba the standards will be the same, that a province will not be able to opt out of a particular federal program and enhance it in another way because they have a larger treasury. I do not see how a majority of Canadians could favour something of that nature. I believe that all Canadians want to have equality throughout Canada, an equality of programs, Mr. Speaker.

I do want to address Quebec. To vote "no" does not mean you are voting against Quebec. I personally want Quebec to be in Canada. My visions of Canada 200 years from now include Quebec to be there. I will do whatever I can to ensure the people of Quebec that I would like to see them remain in Canada, because I believe that Quebec is just as much a part of me as the Province of Manitoba.

If we go back to my great-grandmother who came from the Province of Quebec, my great-great-grandfather came from the East, Mr. Speaker. The national park in Quebec is just as much my park as it is of someone that lives in Quebec, and a national park in Manitoba is just as much a park of theirs as it is of mine. We all live in Canada. We are Canadians before we are our respective provinces whether it is Manitobans, whether it is Quebeckers, whatever it might be.

In listening to the concluding remarks of the First Ministers, I make reference to what Clyde Wells, the Premier of Newfoundland had stated and that was that some day he would like to be able to hear the Premier of Quebec and the Prime Minister, the current Prime Minister of Canada anyway, make a simple statement that they are Canadian first. That is very important to all of us, that people recognize that we should be working for the betterment of Canada.

The sooner we get a government in Ottawa that believes in Canada as one country, not a country of a confederation of regions, a country as one, the better off we will be, I believe, Mr. Speaker. Any decision that I will make on the Meech Lake Accord and the

companion resolutions, I can honestly say will be taken very seriously by myself. It will be taken as a Canadian first. I will take into consideration what my constituents are saying to me. I will take into consideration what the public hearings are saying. I will also take into consideration what my colleagues and my Leader, Sharon Carstairs, is saying.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, if Brian Mulroney is not able to bring together or come up with something to rectify the problem, I believe it is his responsibility, as many Members before me have set out. It is the duty of the Prime Minister to resign his position and to let Canada go on. After all, Canada will be here 300 years from now; the current Prime Minister will not be here three years from now. I find it completely unacceptable. I find that his ethics are very lacking in terms of what he has put the country through.

I can honestly say that Manitobans are just as much Canadians as he is. Just because they say no to Meech Lake does not make them less Canadian. Mr. Speaker, that is something that the Prime Minister has been trying to say to anyone that disagrees with the Meech Lake Accord, that they are not Canadian. Mr. Speaker, you can be Canadian and disagree with the Meech Lake Accord. There are some problems with the Meech Lake Accord. The companion resolution does deal with some of those problems that the Manitoba Task Force Report has brought up.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I hope the Prime Minister is listening in terms of what I and my colleagues from this Chamber are telling him, that the bottom line is, what he has done is unethical. If we have learned anything from this, we have learned that this is not a good way of developing a Constitution for Canada.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock? (Agreed)

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Friday).