

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, November 24, 1981

The House met at 2 p.m.

• (1405)

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### THE CONSTITUTION

AGREEMENT ON CONTENTS—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

**Hon. Jake Epp (Provencher):** Madam Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 43 on a matter of urgent and pressing necessity. Whereas ten first ministers representing and reflecting the diversity of Canada were able to put aside their personal, political and sectional interests in order to reach a compromise which will provide Canadians with a patriated Constitution containing a flexible amending formula, a Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and includes equal rights for men and women, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker):

That this House reaffirms its faith and commitment to the Canadian federal principle of compromise and consensus which has served this country well for 114 years.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent for this motion?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Epp:** Madam Speaker, I am pleased, on behalf of our party, that the members of this House have accepted this motion in the unanimous spirit which we have just seen displayed.

We believe that it is important to serve notice that this House believes the federal principle can work. Over the last number of weeks we have seen demonstrated, despite the acrimony that has prevailed and surrounded the constitutional question, that in fact compromise, consensus and agreement can be found.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Epp:** Over the past year many Canadians must have begun to wonder whether the federal system to which this House has just reaffirmed its commitment could, in fact, work. The atmosphere surrounding federal-provincial discussions was one which often appeared to be without those traditional Canadian virtues of mutual trust, moderation and compromise.

As has been said so often by our leader, the federal system can work if those of us in it want to make it work.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Epp:** It is important, in view of that working ability which the federal system has again demonstrated, that we review what has in fact happened through compromise and through agreement. First, we have seen that the first ministers of Canada are willing to make the federal system work for the benefit of all Canadians. They have reached an agreement on contentious issues such as an amending formula and a Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The first ministers should be congratulated for their flexibility and also for the fact that they abandoned antagonistic stands, and made significant concessions.

What they have produced is a document which has been called typically Canadian. Certainly it was drafted within the fine Canadian tradition of compromise and consensus. A Charter of Rights and Freedoms and amending formula now reflect and represent the Canadian federation in all its diversity.

As has been mentioned, Madam Speaker, we should be able to expect in this country that diversity should not only be fostered but that it should, in fact, be encouraged.

We often say in this House that diversity is our strength. So often, on the other hand, we see legislation or approaches taken which in fact violate that very diversity. After those initial steps taken toward a new Constitution, I believe that the later additions to the accord have further demonstrated that agreement can be found. What are some of those agreements?

First, it is important to remember that Canadians were anxious that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms should apply equally to men and women. That is a position which has been unanimously adopted by this House. As well, special groups and individual Canadians applied pressure on the government and on Members of Parliament, as well as using gentle persuasion on those who had some contacts with Members of Parliament who were to make a decision.

• (1410)

Canadians were also anxious that the aboriginal and treaty rights of native people should be preserved under the new Constitution, and again everyone played his or her role in trying to alter the agreement which was reached by the first ministers.

There was criticism that, by suggesting amendments, our party was in fact going to break the accord. That was never our intention or our purpose. However, it was our purpose and

## S.O. 43

our belief that the accord itself could be improved through this Parliament.

Through intergovernmental negotiation and compromise, ten Canadian governments have responded to these concerns and have now expressed their willingness to change their original agreement in order to ensure that the final constitutional accord will truly reflect Canadian society. Again the first ministers have proved that the federal system can and does work, and that they are willing to make it work for the benefit of all Canadians.

Traditional Canadian virtues of trust and moderation inherent in our federal system, of which we have spoken earlier, have now been reasserted and reconfirmed. The last 114 years have not been a failure. The last 114 years have seen the growth of a country and the inclusion of additional provinces to make it the ten we now have, and many of us have the fond hope that to those ten will be added the Northwest Territories and Yukon at some future date.

The last days have also taught us one other lesson, and that is that, in the new era of federal-provincial discussions, Canadians must be vigilant. And governments should be aware of this new vigilance on the part of Canadians and that what is going on behind closed doors cannot be left behind closed doors. Somebody mentioned yesterday that if women should ever have been in the kitchen, they should have been in the kitchen when the accord was drafted.

I say to Your Honour, and to all members of the House, that this accord should lead to a more open and tolerant view not only of our differences but also in the discussions of those differences as they lead to the accords we all seek. Given the events of the past year it is important for this House to reaffirm its commitment to the Canadian federal tradition of compromise and consensus, and I thank the House for accepting the motion.

**Miss Coline Campbell (South West Nova):** Madam Speaker, I too would like to speak to this motion under Standing Order 43 and to thank the House for giving its unanimous consent. I applaud the ten first ministers who finally saw the light. If it had not been for the unity of women across Canada, whether they were in the kitchen or out of the kitchen, we probably would not have the inclusion of Section 28 in the charter. This has been a progression starting way back, probably with the Royal Commission on the Status of Women.

During the past weeks the minister responsible for the status of women, and all the women in this House, have worked on this in one way or another. There have been efforts put forth by provincial and federal advisory councils—

**Some hon. Members:** Question.

**Miss Campbell:** I am sorry. There are still a few seconds left. It might hurt hon. members opposite, but certain things need to be said in this debate.

The Advisory Council on the Status of Women—

**Some hon. Members:** Question.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. Oral Questions.

**Some hon. Members:** Shame!

• (1415)

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

## HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

## UREA FORMALDEHYDE FOAM INSULATION—REFUSAL OF MORTGAGES TO AFFECTED HOME OWNERS

**Mr. Geoff Scott (Hamilton-Wentworth):** Madam Speaker, we on this side of the House have known for many months the havoc that the government has created with the urea formaldehyde foam insulation problem. We are now seeing the magnitude of that problem. Now it is no longer just a health problem. It is no longer just a problem of corrosion and a resulting fire hazard. It is a problem which means potential economic disaster for 80,000 to 100,000 home owners who have UFFI in their homes. Therefore I have a question for the minister responsible for CMHC.

Mortgage lenders, trust companies, banks and financial institutions are refusing to guarantee mortgages to people whose homes are insulated with urea formaldehyde foam insulation. What can these home owners do?

**Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works):** Madam Speaker, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation is involved in the insurance of mortgage funds, as well as the financial institutions mentioned by the hon. member. In fact CMHC is probably the major insurer of that type of funding in the private residential sector. I say to the hon. member, and to others who may have seen some press coverage earlier today, that Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation policy is not changed. It will continue to insure homes insulated with this material. There is nothing different today from what there was yesterday in the insuring operation of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, which is the major insurer in this country.

## ROLE OF CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION APPRAISERS

**Mr. Geoff Scott (Hamilton-Wentworth):** Madam Speaker, there is absolutely no question that the minister's department and CMHC have been involved with this and that the government has been a co-conspirator in the whole UFFI mess from the beginning. In the meantime we are concerned about those people whose mortgages come up for renewal today, tomorrow, and next week. What instructions did the minister give to CMHC appraisers if they run into local buyer resistance when a mortgage is up for renewal—not when the house is up for sale but when the mortgage is up for renewal?