



Fourth Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

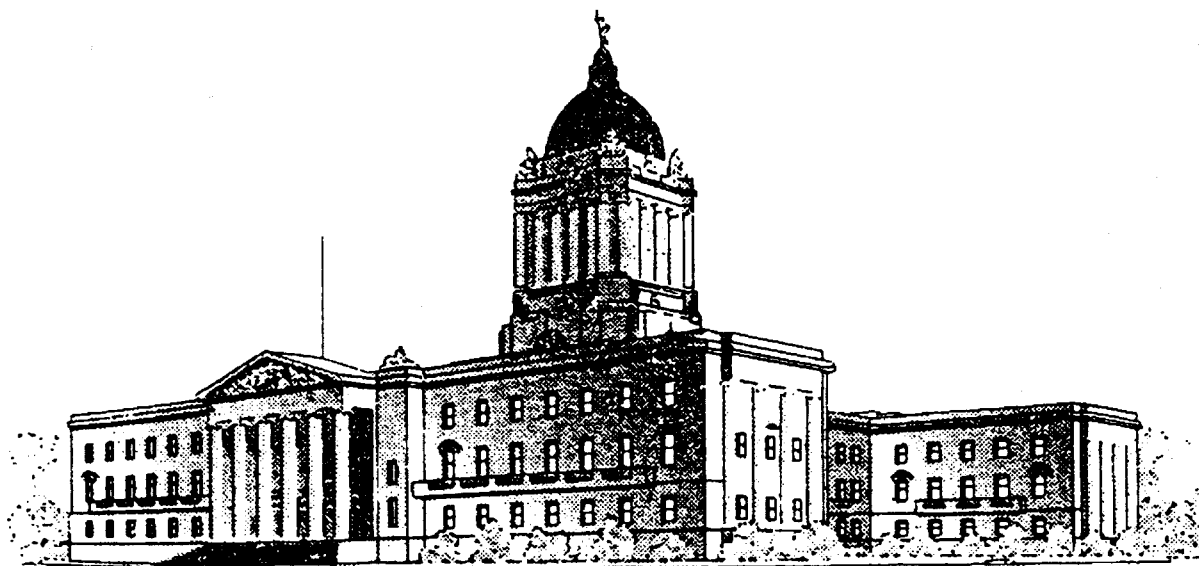
of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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Thirty-Sixth Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, March 19, 1998

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

ORDERS OF THE DAY

DEBATE ON GOVERNMENT RESOLUTION

**Manitoba Legislative Task Force
on Canadian Unity**

Madam Speaker: To resume adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the honourable First Minister (Mr. Filmon), standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render) who has 12 minutes remaining.

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, I want to put brief comments on the record. I first of all want to pay tribute and thank the members of the committee who took so much of their time to devote to this particular cause, and, in particular, I also want to note the contributions of the chair, Mr. Wally Fox-Decent, an individual who certainly has contributed more than his share to public policy and public life in Manitoba and an individual I have a great deal of respect for.

I also appreciate the manner in which the committee conducted its work. I know it made good faith attempts to reach out to Manitobans and solicit their opinions, not to the extent that we would have liked. We had different ideas as to how Manitobans could have been brought into the process, but, nonetheless, I think the committee did a commendable job and congratulations are in order.

When I first saw the Calgary Framework and I had heard about the discussions that took place at Calgary, to put it mildly, I was angered. I was angered, Madam Speaker, because to me the process and the content of the document represented a betrayal of the lessons and the experience of the Meech Lake Accord. I was particularly angered by the fact that our Premier (Mr. Filmon), the person who represented this province,

apparently had not heeded the lessons of Meech Lake. Once again, the premiers of this country alone went off into a room and put their heads together in the absence of representatives from other orders of government. In particular, I want to talk about representatives from the aboriginal communities and governments of Canada.

Once again, the premiers of this country came out with a document that made only passing reference to the role of aboriginal peoples in Canada. I could understand why some premiers in other provinces would have engaged in a process like that and come to pass a document like this, but for the Premier of Manitoba to have engaged in that process and agree to the text is lamentable, because this particular Premier (Mr. Filmon) was here during Meech Lake, had a critical role in both its creation and its demise. I could not fathom how this Premier could have turned his back on the insights offered to him and his government and all Manitobans during what became known as the Meech Lake crisis, because the Meech Lake crisis took place in this very Chamber, Madam Speaker, and in this province. This is the province that made a difference on Meech Lake. Consequently, it is this province that had an instrumental role moving toward the Charlottetown process, but, all of a sudden, the role of this province is trashed when it came to the Calgary Framework.

So having said that, I was very, very proud when the members for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) and Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) agreed to sit on the committee because it provided the input, the balance, that was required in the Calgary process. Once again, it was Manitoba that recognized, at least in one caucus, the critical importance of the involvement of aboriginal peoples in constitutional discussion and issues of national interest. I say constitutional, because, Madam Speaker, the discussion is over a constitutional nature, although we recognize that the framework is not to be a constitutional document.

Now, what is behind my anger? It is simply a reflection of the reality that it seems every time that Canadians are alerted to a threat of Quebec separation,

that issue is immediately brought to the fore and overcomes all of the decades of mistreatment of aboriginal peoples. We never seem to get around to dealing, in a meaningful way, with justice for aboriginal peoples in this country. When it comes to constitutional change, First Nations become last nations.

I recently was given the book, *Reflections of a Siamese Twin* by John Ralston Saul, a brilliant book that effectively deals insightfully with many of the myths of our country. In that book, Saul writes the following, and I want to quote it, because I think it encapsulates the frustration of many Canadians, particularly aboriginal Canadians, about how we seem to get onto the Quebec issue in a flash but are certainly prepared to leave the aboriginal challenges out of the equation.

Saul writes: We have had our tragic and clearly unacceptable moments. By the way, he was talking really about the great success that Canada is, the great democratic two language and multicultural success. He goes on to say, these are our real tragedies. The aboriginal community has suffered from endless acts of injustice, violence and dishonesty including the trashing of treaties signed in good faith.

He concludes this theme by saying: But what about the palpable mistreatment of French Canadians inside Quebec? Surely that belongs on the list? The wrongs done were very real, but the context was also far more complicated. As political scientist Jean-Pierre Derriennic puts it: If you explained to an immigrant that French Canadians have also been second class citizens, he goes off to look in the books. He discovers that the St. Lawrence Valley has been governed since 1791 almost without interruption by a state of law which included an elected assembly. In other words, you cannot compare the fate of those who once dominated in Canada, the aboriginals, with the state of the Francophone community. Whatever its problems, the inheritance and the status of the latter, is not a tragedy, end of quote.

Saul, by the way, Madam Speaker, does not have a grudging attitude to Francophones inside Quebec. Not at all. Indeed, in another place in the book, he says and I agree with him: the difficulty of being a Francophone

in Canada and in North America is very real. The population numbers are real, as is the dominant sound of English on the continent. To be a Francophone is to make an effort every day, end of quote. But Saul recognizes that there are tragedies and there are challenges, but the tragedy of aboriginal communities and aboriginal peoples in Canada cannot once again be allowed to be shuffled off and dealt with as is dealt with in the wording and the process of the Calgary Framework.

*(1010)

The second concern I had when I read about the process at Calgary and saw the document, I do have concerns whether this kind of process and document really speaks to the people of Quebec and whether this kind of document and process can really make a difference. Now, Madam Speaker, I care greatly about this country and I will do what I can with my analysis to ensure that this continues as one of the greatest nations on Earth, French and English, multicultural, aboriginal, so I will support any movement toward that end. But I am concerned, particularly after seeing and being involved to a certain extent in the Meech process and the Charlottetown process, that this kind of document is good fodder, certainly for media, for political elites or political leaders, but it does not reach out to the Francophone Quebecois because it does not deal with their daily concerns and challenges.

I was at St. John's High School hearing the comments of three classes there on the Calgary Framework and what they thought of their country. I went down one of the rows in the class and asked them—after, by the way, looking at the very well-produced nationalist documentary on Canada and talking about Calgary Framework and turning their mind to constitutional issues, I asked them what really was on their minds, what concerns did they have. And down the row they went.

They spoke about the threat of student debt, very much so, Madam Speaker. They spoke about the health care system, stretchers in hallways. They spoke about jobs and they spoke about gangs and they spoke about racism, and those were the issues that were foremost on their mind. They did not speak in terms of political concepts. They did not talk in terms of constitutional

issues, issues of accommodation or Calgary Frameworks. It was clear to me—and we discussed it then in the class—and it was clear to them that if we are going to talk to the students of Quebec, students in similar circumstances as the students at St. John's High School, you had to talk to them about student debt, about jobs, about health care, about racism and violence. We have to share solutions, offer each other help, as we did during the ice storm crisis in the province of Quebec. We have to show that on a real way, at a street level, it is important for us to work on our challenges together that we have something very much in common, even though our language is different.

The other concern I have, Madam Speaker, is that we have to recognize that if we do not deal on a street level with the people of Quebec and if we cannot bridge on the basis of a national vision of sharing of public services, of fairness and justice on a work-a-day basis, the rhetoric will continue on and on. I am always concerned about rhetoric whether it is in a document or rhetoric whether it is from the podium.

I refer for example to the rhetoric of Lucien Bouchard who in a speech on October 22 of 1995 said the following: A no—that is a no vote—means that Jean Chretien can say to us: I want absolute power over what happens in Quebec from now on. I want to be master of Quebec's future. I want you to hand over to me the French language, the culture of Quebec. I want you to hand over employment. I want you to hand over all the policies which shape the identity of Quebec. It is I, Jean Chretien, who from now on will decide for you. We will be alone, disarmed and dispersed, divided, weakened, said Bouchard.

What nonsense. This is the extent to which the rhetoric has gone, the separatist fervour. It is not a reality that we are dealing with. This is not an informed political debate. To overcome it, we have to counter it in a very real way.

So, in conclusion, Madam Speaker, I recognize the very limited value of a document such as the Calgary Framework. But at the same time, I am one who will be on the side of saying if there is even a little something we can do, then I want to be part of it but—going back to my first concern—only if the

framework was amended to rightly recognize a better process and a better justice for aboriginal peoples in Canada.

I understand that in the course of the discussions between the government and the opposition representatives on the committee, there was a great deal of focus—thanks to the members for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) and Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson)—on the issue of involving aboriginal peoples in the process and recognizing their rightful place in Canada. I understand that as a result of those discussions, we, as I say, as a caucus and our two representatives made significant gains and I think played a very important educational role in the committee process.

So I was very pleased to see then that the government had, as a result of these discussions, agreed to change the Calgary Framework to recognize the concerns that I, for one, had about the absence of recognition of aboriginal peoples. I suppose I could say, well, I would like the changes to have gone into the actual text, but I see the resolution as it is and I can say here today that whether it is in the THEREFORE clauses, the WHEREAS clauses or in the actual text of the framework, this province once again did come through, did provide a real important reality check for not only the premiers but for Canadians by providing the recognition of aboriginal peoples in the Calgary Framework.

It is a unique contribution in Canada, and I think it speaks very highly of the members of the committee and the respective caucuses, but it speaks most highly of the representatives from The Pas and Rupertsland on that committee who brought the real-life experiences of their constituents and their peoples to the table.

So on the understanding, Madam Speaker, that the Calgary Framework is not itself a constitutional document, and although I have other thoughts on it, I want to limit my remarks to what I think are the essential concerns and triumphs of the Calgary Framework. I join with my colleagues in supporting the resolution that is before the House. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: For clarification of the record, please, I neglected to ask if there was leave to permit the motion to be standing in the name of the honourable

member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render). Is there leave?
[agreed]

The motion will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Vital.

* (1020)

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): Madam Speaker, I, too, am pleased to stand before the House today and put some comments on the record in regard to the task force. I would like to congratulate all the members of the task force which I was a part of. I think that rather than stand before the House and single out individuals for any or all of their contributions, I think that what we did as a committee was probably something that was achieved through working together, getting an understanding of each other's positions and trying to reach a compromise or a resolution that was acceptable to us all.

I think the entire purpose of the task force was to go out and speak to Manitobans and to form consensus from what they had told us through presentations and through various other methods such as the householder that was sent out, through e-mails, through faxes, through phone calls. I think what we have accomplished by bringing forward this resolution is something that takes into consideration all points of view of Manitobans and concerns that Manitobans brought forward. I think that that speaks very highly of the group of people we were with. I do not think, as I said earlier, that I would single one person out more than another in the sense that I think being able to reach consensus was important to the task force, and having a resolution that we can all speak positively towards has been our goal, and I think we have successfully achieved that.

I want to, again, just acknowledge the members of the task force. For me, it was a real learning experience. I think one of the benefits I have seen as a member of the Legislature is the task force that I have been asked to partake in has enlightened me to many of the people of Manitoba and their concerns, not only in particular areas as some of the task force are more specific, but the task force on unity itself. You get a real outpouring of emotion when you travel around the province to different communities and people who are willing to

come forward and state how they feel and what their concerns are in regard to the unification of Canada. But the message is always the same. It seems that everyone is on the same page on this issue in the sense that the unity of Canada, I think, is more important than we would be led to believe by certain groups of people and certain members of the media in the sense of the message that is out there.

What we heard was nothing short of phenomenal in the sense of the support of the unification of Canada, keeping Canada together, and the support of the province of Quebec, and as the member had stated earlier, in the resolution that has come forward that readily, I think, identifies some of the aboriginal issues and addresses it as such. The task force was chaired by Wally Fox-Decent who, until I became involved in this particular task force, I knew of and about but I do want to put on the record that I found him absolutely wonderful to work with. He is a man that can find consensus and has a very gentle way of bringing forward suggestions and ideas that seem to be acceptable to all.

The support staff that travelled with us, and I think that needs to be said, is the fact that in January we set up a schedule of communities that we were going to visit to try and get a cross-section of all Manitobans. The time required to do that is a big commitment, not only from the members but from the staff and the travel arrangements and everything, so I do want to just acknowledge them and thank them for their support. It is always nice when you are in a job like this to know that the people who are managing the system for you are there and everything seemed to work out very well for all involved. It is not unlike many of the task forces that I have served on. The staff deserve and I certainly want to recognize their contributions to the process.

I think the declaration itself is more of a statement of values that we have in Manitoba and in Canada. I think when this was put forward as the Calgary Framework the idea was that we would try and put out a set of principles that all people could agree with. Although there may be some differences of opinion as to how successful certain points are, I think the idea is that we all accept them or would like to accept them as the way we would like to see things and the way we believe that

Canada can work and continue to be together if these principles are applied.

I think that when we travelled we tried not to make it a constitutional question or discussion. I think the idea was that we wanted people to come in and really tell us what they felt about Canadian unity and how they saw us moving forward in securing that unification of the country that I think we all want.

One of the things that touched me I think the most on our tours was the fact that when people came forward they spoke very emotionally, they spoke very from the heart. There was no—the politics I think of all members was checked at the door as we came in. The idea was to get people involved in heartfelt discussion and how they saw the partnerships in Canada working for all people.

I think the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), who was also a member, mentioned yesterday, and I think one of the things that I noticed too was, a lot of the people that came forward, as we talked to them what we found was, there was a real sense that one of the ways in helping resolve some of the situations particularly with Quebec is just in the fact of how we talk to each other and how we communicate as provinces quite often.

I think of my own experiences growing up in rural Manitoba. It was a long time before the country boy got to see the city, and I think that the same thing applies when we are dealing with other provinces in the country. The more we experience those places and what they have to offer, I think the more understanding and perhaps more—I hesitate to use the word “sympathetic” because that is not the message—but I think we understand the causes more and I think it bodes us well to encourage that. The suggestion was the exchange of students between provinces, things like that, where we can tell people about our province and our way of life but also learn about other provinces' ways of life and ways of doing things.

I think that is vital in the sense that, if we understand each other, and we understand the motives and means behind what we are doing, it can sometimes make it more acceptable. I think of my own personal experiences. I have some children that have had the

opportunity to live in Quebec, to work in Quebec, and also to travel throughout Quebec extensively. The comments that they continue to make to me is that they never felt a sense of anything other than the wonderful hospitality that they received, that people were very friendly. They were interested in the province of Manitoba. They wanted to find out more about it.

Some of their friends have been fortunate enough to travel out to Manitoba since their meetings, and they cannot believe what a wonderful, warm province we have, because that is not what they are hearing in some cases in their province. They are basing their opinions on what they are hearing, not what they are experiencing. So, I think, it is vital that we continue to open up the educational field to our children and to the next generation, because I think if they understand and they have a knowledge of it, it certainly empowers them to make the decisions that are right.

I think of that in my own family experience. I think my thoughts towards Quebec are certainly far more open and far more understanding than, perhaps, my father's generation. I would hope that my family or my sons and daughters would have a greater understanding and a greater feeling toward Quebec, as it is being part of Canada and part of our country that we are all so proud of.

The message that many people told us at these meetings, and I think it came through in the householders, is that we all want Canada to be a part, to be one, to be whole, and that anything that we could do within our realm, we should be encouraged to do so and we should be encouraging all Manitobans and all Canadians to participate in that exercise.

* (1030)

As I said, the process that we followed, there was a householder that was mailed out. We held the public meetings. We tried to offer access to the people of Manitoba in as many ways as we possibly could. I think that one of the highlights of this project was the high school, the project in which a lot of the members went into their communities and spoke at their schools and presented the message as far as what the Calgary declaration was and what we would hope to achieve out of it. I think the feedback that we got was very positive

from the children on the future of our province in the sense that in a lot of cases, they surprised many of us as to their actual understanding of the situation. In many cases, I think they had as good a grip or better of the circumstances involving the Quebec issue as anyone else in the province. They offered a lot of interesting and, quite often, enlightening examples and details of how they might see us moving forward dealing with the province of Quebec, particularly on the separation issue that they have.

The task force itself offered the services to the communities that we went to. We tried to accommodate the language issues. We tried to accommodate any of the so-called impediments that might be out there when you go into a community. I think we have tried to accommodate everyone and give them, facilitate the opportunity for them to come forward.

I think for me probably one of the highlights as we travelled around Manitoba was travelling to northern Manitoba. I have not spent a great deal of time up there, but we were very well received. Very good meetings. It was interesting to partake in some of the communities that we travelled to. Unfortunately, I wish we could have got to more and had more opportunity and time to spend with the people and discuss at length some of their other concerns.

One of the comments that we heard, or at least from my perspective, was a history lesson. I think we have all studied history and had an opportunity at some time to do some historical study of Canada. But when you actually sit down at a table with people who immigrated to Canada, or their families did, and listen to their life stories, it gives you a better perspective than any book could ever give you, in the sense of a face-to-face communication with the people who were concerned about the unity of Canada, speaking as immigrants who came to Canada and the experiences that they have had and how they would like to see things implemented to make it a better Canada for all.

I do not want to monopolize the time, Madam Speaker. I support the resolution. I was a part of it; I am very proud to be a part of it. I think it has been something that has enlightened me to a lot more of the issues of Canada and of Quebec and of the aboriginal

concerns which I think we addressed as a group. I think the resolution that we are asked to support today as an entire body in the Legislature is one that we can do so. I hope that it will lead to future discussions that will solidify Canada as one country that includes Quebec, that includes the many cultures that we have here that make us the greatest place in the world at this point in time and will continue to do so.

So I think with those few comments, I will let someone else put their comments on the record. I thank you for the opportunity, and again I salute the task force members, colleagues, for the fine job that they have done. Thank you.

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, I, too, rise in support of the Calgary declaration with the recognition that it is a modest step, offering good will and a very important addition to its original formulation, namely, the last WHEREAS which recognizes much more clearly the role of aboriginal people in this great country's future, as well as its past.

I want to start by just sharing a few personal reflections of my history as a Canadian person. Though I have absolutely no regrets about it, I grew up in a family that had very few resources. Specifically, in all of my growing-up years, we never had a family holiday. We did not ever travel as a family even so far as the next town. I emphasize here I am not crying poverty, because I had a wonderful period of growing up in a small lake town in Ontario.

But I did make a commitment to myself and with my partner that when we had an opportunity with children to come to understand this country that we would do so, and that we would ensure that all of our children had an opportunity to visit all of the provinces and the territories if we had that opportunity ourselves financially, and we did. It was a wonderful thing to do, because I discovered much of our country at the same time that our children did.

So I stood on Signal Hill with them in the Atlantic fog and assumed there was an ocean out there somewhere, but we did not see it because of the fog; we certainly heard the signal. I have walked on Long Beach and camped on Long Beach with my kids on Vancouver Island. We have had the privilege of

standing under the midnight sun in Inuvik and being bitten by black flies and mosquitoes, as anyone who has been up there will well attest.

We have seen grizzly bears thundering down mountainsides in Tombstone provincial park, which may be aptly named in the Yukon because it may well be the sight of a number of tombstones from goldminers. Those who know that park will know that that is where the headwaters of the Klondike River rise, and I have walked through those headwaters with two of my kids. We have spent time on Ile d'Orleans picking raspberries and visiting with our French-Canadian sisters and brothers. I have embarrassed myself in French, which perhaps some others have done as well.

On one particular memorable occasion we had a flat tire on our way into la petite ville de Gaspé [the town of Gaspé] and I went into the gas station and said to the person working there: Monsieur, j'ai une crevette [Sir, I have a shrimp]. Of course, the member for Gladstone (Mr. Rocan) will know what a fool I made of myself in saying so because I had une crevaision [a flat tire]. So the attendant looked at my tire and said: Oh, Monsieur, c'est une grande crevette [Oh, sir, that's a big shrimp]. And even at that point I was not quite sure why it was so funny, but I did find out. So I have struggled in French with my high school French and been actually rewarded in most parts of Quebec for making that effort by people that, as the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) suggested, have always been generous and gracious in their welcoming.

I think when a Legislative Assembly undertakes the kind of task that the members did under the wise and patient chairperson, Mr. Dr. Fox-Decent, I think we are exercising in a very fundamental way the essence of the privilege that we all enjoy as members serving in this place. I know that there are many times when the debate becomes rancorous and I take part on that as do members on the other side, but there are times when I think members of both sides have noted that we put that aside and we strive to sort out the more fundamental questions of why we exist as a nation and how we can continue to strengthen that union into the future.

* (1040)

Canada has had a history, as Eric Lindblom, who is a management guru, has said, of muddling through. Indeed, Lindblom wrote a text in which he celebrated the process of muddling through as a very valid, useful and historically sound process of evolving through a situation of great complexity where there was no clear consensus about the desired direction, that there is nothing dishonourable about muddling through. Indeed, Lindblom makes a very strong case that some of the best companies in the world have done it very successfully and that some of the most diverse nations have followed that path as well.

Madam Speaker, nations come into being and continue in being by the slender thread, and it is a slender thread, of the consent of their citizens. It may be thought that is only true of free nations, but history, particularly recent history, teaches us otherwise. It was the withdrawal of the consent of the Polish people from their failed centralist government that caused Poland to finally leave the fold of being an eastern bloc nation under Russian domination and become a free nation once again.

The same was true, Madam Speaker, of the people of Hungary who paid dearly in 1950 for their attempt to leave, in 1957, their attempt to assert their nature as a free people, but finally achieved that after decades of struggle. In the late 1980s when once again Hungary became a free nation and is evolving towards a higher form of democracy.

Now, Madam Speaker, it is a relatively easy thing when a nation is homogenous, linguistically, culturally sometimes from the point of view of their religion as well, but particularly linguistically and culturally. It is a relatively easy thing for nations to continue to exist. I think of the Scandinavian nations in this regard, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, where the stresses and strains within those countries, whatever they may be, are not fundamental to their identity.

Such nations and indeed all free nations continue to exist by recognizing three principles; first, the rule of law, and that is why it is very important that there be examination of what the rule of law would mean to any Quebec move toward secession. It is not a pleasant thing to have to examine the implications of taking a country apart, but I believe however unpleasant and

country apart, but I believe however unpleasant and difficult it is, it is an important thing to do because nations that do not follow the rule of law cannot in the long run stand. So although it offends the separatists in Quebec that the federal government is taking the issue of the rules of secession, the laws governing secession, to the Supreme Court, I nevertheless believe that that is an important though somewhat distasteful thing that we all must do.

The second thing that allows nations to continue to exist, Madam Speaker, is the engagement of their citizens in a lively debate and a continuing debate about the texture and shape and quality of life within that nation, and here I think there has been great progress made in Canada over the last 25 years.

Madam Speaker, when my children were attending French immersion school in Fort Garry School Division, they were twinned with the city of Drummondville, and over a period of about four years, I believe, we had annual exchanges with students from the junior high level of the city of Drummondville, a fairly small city, perhaps about the size of Fort Garry as a community.

We were pleased and honoured and happy to have those kids in our house at least on one occasion. It was one of those junior high parties that all parents sometimes dread, but nevertheless we had a lot of fun. We had about 70 kids in our house, and our house is not huge, but they were all there, packed in, having a wonderful time exchanging views, ideas, jokes, fun. We had a great evening with no problems at all, but, you know, it was shocking to those students and even more particularly to those teachers from Drummondville to find that there was a vibrant and very much alive Francophone culture in Manitoba.

They were astounded that Circle Moliere was a professional theatre, that the Societe Franco-Manitobaine was a very vibrant and complex and multifaceted association that provided cultural and other kinds of support to the French population of Manitoba. They were astounded to find that our laws were actually printed in French, thanks to the work of a previous NDP government against, sadly to say, opposition from many members of the party sitting in government at this time.

So they were very surprised to find these things out. They were surprised, I think, sadly, because there is, perhaps less today, but there is still continuing a view in the separatist community in Quebec that outside of Quebec the French language and culture suffers badly, and, indeed, there have been times and places when it has.

But in the main, Madam Speaker, in Manitoba, in Alberta, in Ontario, and, of course, most of all in L'Acadie in New Brunswick, the French culture is varied, alive, vibrant, well. The arts, the music, the writing coming out of those cultures is as strong as out of any cultural group in Canada.

The third element of a nation's continued existence is its generosity to all of its citizens, but most particularly to those of its citizens who are least able to enjoy the fruits of citizenship. It is here that I join with my colleagues from Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) and from The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) and from Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) in expressing some sorrow that the process of arriving at the Calgary declaration was one of premiers meeting behind closed doors, nine of 10 without significant involvement of Canada's First Nations, and the original declaration was deficient in failing to recognize that the needs and aspirations and contributions of First Nations had been sadly neglected in other constitutional discussions. That has been remedied in our version of the declaration, particularly in the WHEREAS that references the aspirations and contributions and needs of aboriginal people.

So generosity is a very important issue. I call on all of us to continue to be generous in our statements and in our offers of future engagement to all Canadians, whether they be citizens of the province of Quebec or First Nations citizens of any province of our country.

Madam Speaker, the issues of patriotism are so often distorted by those who would sloganeer in order not to prove their own patriotism, but to attempt to embarrass or to shame or to be less than generous to citizens whose views they do not share. So I was pleased that members of the federal party of the Progressive Conservatives, as well as all other members of the House of Commons, except the Reform Party, took the view that the flags on either side of the Speaker's Chair were the flags of Canada and should be, and were

indeed, symbols precious and to be honoured. What Reform members were engaged in was not patriotism but baiting and not moving the debate on Canadian unity forward but moving it backwards.

* (1050)

In the history of our country there has been a great deal of anxiety about the term "asymmetrical federalism." Yet as all of those of the legal profession sitting opposite and any students of history will know, Canada has had asymmetrical federalism from its outset. The Code Civil, the Napoleonic Code, the traditions that were guaranteed by the BNA Act, the only bilingual province in Canada, New Brunswick, the rights of Catholic minorities in Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, and Manitoba are different in regard to public education. The requirement to translate laws and regulations are different in many jurisdictions. Even things such as Manitoba's very proud and, I think, very important tradition of holding public hearings on every single bill that comes before this Legislature is different than many other legislatures. In very important ways, this country is asymmetrical, and nevertheless it has remained united.

So we ought not to shrink in debate about how we evolve as a nation from the notion that that evolution may require something somewhat different in New Brunswick than it does in Newfoundland. Indeed, all members will know that very recently an amendment to the Constitution was passed in regard to schooling in Newfoundland. Whether you agree with it or do not agree with it, it points out that for all of the years that Newfoundland was in Confederation, from the time it joined after the Second World War until recently, their school system was constitutionally different from the rest of the country's.

There is nothing wrong with that in a nation, a nation as varied and different as Canada. There is nothing wrong with recognizing that to continue to be engaged in the rule of law, engaged with citizens in the dialogue about where we are going as a country and engaged in generosity that those requirements may work out to different practicalities in different parts of the country, that should not offend us. Indeed it seems to me that that increases the elasticity and the vibrancy of our constitutional unity, because I think as members in this

House have often said as they debate and speak of their ridings and their needs, unity does not mean uniformity.

The needs of the community of the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) are different from the needs of the community of the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson), and we would all be able to affirm that for each of our ridings. Responding to those needs in ways that continue the three principles that I have enunciated I do not think weakens our province; I think it strengthens it.

Finally, in my last few moments, Madam Speaker, I want to speak to what I think is lacking in the current debate and probably cannot reasonably have been expected to be dealt with in the Calgary declaration itself, although one would wish it had been. In a practical way, the Calgary declaration is an offer of generosity and engagement to those who are federalists and those who are unsure in Quebec. I do not think any of us think that the hard-core separatist movement in Quebec, which has existed virtually for all of Canada's history, will be moved by a declaration. I am sorry that that is the case but, in practical terms, I do not believe that their views of their destiny, as they call it, will be varied much by the Calgary declaration.

What would move and what does move the federalist people of all parts of Canada, those of us who believe in a strong federal government, what does move us, and what I know because I have many friends in Quebec and I talk with them often, what does move them is the stake they have in the nation.

Let me say that successive federal governments, by their actions affecting post-secondary education, medicare, social services, pension regimes, seniors benefits, unemployment insurance and a host of other actions, have weakened this country. They have weakened it severely.

In this province, Madam Speaker, medicare attracts from the federal government now less than \$250 million every year—less than \$250 million—which is about 12 percent of what we spend on our health care system. Now, by an accident of history and not by any special deal or anything that people should be upset about, by an accident of history, the province of Quebec receives less than 7 percent of the cost of their

medicare system from the federal government. Fewer than 40 percent of all Canadians who lose their jobs today are covered by employment insurance.

Surely, Madam Speaker, it is reasonable to ask: why would people wish to stay in a federation if the federation has little to offer in terms of the rights of citizenship? Surely the core of our rights, apart from our constitutional rights under the law, are those rights that a nation extends to its citizens in generosity for their contribution to its well-being, namely the rights to education, the rights to decent, accessible, affordable, portable, comprehensive health care, the rights to protection against the loss of employment which they could not reasonably avoid, the rights to a reasonable ability to live their retirement years in dignity.

Successive federal governments have undermined those rights to the point where many people in Quebec, in the sovereigntist and in the federalist camps, wonder just what is the message here. The message of the Calgary declaration, the message of successive high-blown letters is, we want you all to stay and we want all Canadians to stay united, but the real message is the message we experience when we go to our crowded hospitals, when we see our young people unable to access post-secondary education, when we deal as all of us do in our offices over and over again with people who have been deemed ineligible for employment insurance.

* (1100)

Madam Speaker, if the federal government is truly committed to Canadian unity, then it will move very quickly to re-engage our citizens in the generosity of citizenship which is represented and symbolized by the commitment to their health, their education, their economic security as citizens of our country.

So I stand in support of the declaration, but it must be said that the declaration will do little unless the federal government begins to recognize that it has so weakened our federation and so unnecessarily done so in the light of the enormous budget surpluses which have been run in the last two years now, not just this year, but in the last two years on a national accounts basis. They have done so unnecessarily and to the detriment of us all, whether we be federalists or sovereigntists. They have

made their case for national unity weaker by their lack of generosity of spirit.

So I thank you for the opportunity to put my support for this declaration on the record. I call on all members to continue the generosity that is symbolized in this declaration. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Denis Rocan (Gladstone): I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak to the Calgary Framework on Canadian unity. I would like to thank all of the members of the task force for their hard work and the effort that they committed to putting together their report and seeking the opinion of all Manitobans.

If it pleases the House, I will be delivering my talk today in both French and English because my very dear and close friend, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Radcliffe), indeed the MLA for River Heights, had asked that I would put a few remarks in my mother tongue. I will also, because I have not had much opportunity to get my remarks together, I will confirm right here and now that I had to remove a paragraph from the report. A better word is I will use a paragraph that was already translated in the report, and I will be putting that on the record, so these are not all my own words. I share that with you right now.

L'unité du Canada est une chose en laquelle je crois profondément. Je me souviens très bien du rapatriement de Grande-Bretagne de notre constitution et des débats concernant les Accords du lac Meech, ainsi que du référendum de Charlottetown.

Je parle en mon propre nom parce que je crois que l'unité canadienne est l'affaire de tous. Je suis très fier de notre pays et du travail que nous faisons afin de conserver le Québec au sein du Canada. Je ne veux pas abandonner le rêve d'un Canada uni. Mon Canada inclut et incluera, je l'espère, toujours, le Québec. Je crois que les discussions de Calgary vont dans le bon sens et permettront de trouver un accord pour conserver, de façon permanente, le Québec au sein du Canada.

[Translation]

Canadian unity is something in which I profoundly believe. I remember very well the repatriation from

Great Britain of our Constitution and the debates concerning the Meech Lake Accord as well as the Charlottetown referendum.

I am speaking on my own behalf because I believe that Canadian unity is the business of all of us. I am very proud of our country and of the work that we are doing to maintain Quebec within Canada. I do not want to abandon the dream of a united Canada. My Canada includes, and I hope will always include Quebec. I believe that the Calgary discussions move in the right direction and will enable us to find an agreement to maintain Quebec within Canada permanently.

[English]

I, along with many members of this Assembly, met with high school students throughout Manitoba to discuss the Calgary Framework. I was impressed by their knowledge of past constitutional debates and also with the intensity of their desire to keep Canada together. I am very pleased with the way in which the public consultations on the Calgary Framework on national unity were carried out within Manitoba. It is my hope that each and every Grades 11 and 12 student in the province, and across Canada, for that matter, has had the opportunity to speak with their elected provincial representative about the Calgary Framework.

Comme je l'ai dit, j'ai été très impressionné par l'importance des connaissances dont ont fait preuve ces étudiants concernant les précédents débats constitutionnels canadiens. Il est certain qu'ils n'abordent pas la possibilité de la séparation de façon indifférente. Les étudiants de la circonscription de Gladstone s'étaient en effet engagés en faveur de l'union du Canada. Ils sont ravis par l'idée de mettre en place des programmes d'échange avec des étudiants Québécois, ce qui leur permettra non seulement d'améliorer leurs connaissances de la langue française, mais aussi de se familiariser avec la culture du Québec.

C'est au nom des jeunes de notre pays que j'invite tous les membres de cette assemblée à voter en faveur de la résolution gouvernementale sur les discussions de Calgary concernant l'unité nationale. En effet, nous avons l'obligation de tout faire pour laisser aux jeunes Canadiens, un pays en meilleur état que lorsque nous

l'avons reçu. Ceci est un but fondamental pour mon gouvernement et il n'y a pas de meilleur moyen d'y arriver que de leur garantir un Canada uni.

[Translation]

As I have stated, I was very impressed by the depth of knowledge that these students showed concerning past Canadian constitutional debates. It is certain that they do not approach the possibility of separation indifferently. The students of Gladstone constituency were committed to Canadian unity. They are delighted by the idea of setting up exchange programs with Quebec students which will enable them not only to improve their knowledge of the French language but also to become more familiar with Quebec's culture.

It is on behalf of the young people of our country that I invite all members of this Assembly to vote in favour of the government's resolution on the Calgary Framework concerning national unity. Indeed, we have the obligation to do everything possible to leave to our young Canadians a country that is in a better state than when we inherited it. This is a fundamental objective for my government, and there is no better way of achieving it than that of guaranteeing to them a united Canada.

[English]

One aspect of the framework which I particularly like is the acknowledgement of our diversity as a nation and the special recognition of our aboriginal people and their distinct culture. This goes a long way to overcoming one of the major criticisms of the Meech Lake Accord.

I am confident that as a nation we will together find a way to keep our country intact. I believe that the answer can be found within the seven points of the Calgary declaration on Canadian unity. All of you know the seven points of the Calgary Framework, and I will not proceed to address them, but I will say that their premiers and territorial leaders have done an excellent job of exemplifying what it means to be Canadian.

As the task force report notes, we as Canadians have an historical inability to define ourselves as a nation.

Nonetheless, Canadians have always been free to pursue individual and community goals. I hope that all Canadians will take this opportunity to define for themselves what they believe it means to be a Canadian. After giving it some careful thought, I hope that all Canadians will come to the similar conclusion that although we are a country of considerable diversity, we find our strength in this characteristic. It is also my hope that all Canadians will be able to define the privilege of being a Canadian as being a tolerant people from coast to coast to coast. Therefore, their definition of being a Canadian will hopefully also leave room for Quebec to survive and prosper within their Canada.

Si j'avais la solution pour garder le Canada uni, je la partagerais immédiatement avec chaque Canadien, mais je ne doute pas que nous parviendrons à trouver une solution. Si l'on devait retenir qu'une seule chose positive des discussions de Calgary, ce serait notre engagement en faveur de l'unité nationale. Mais je sais que nous n'abandonnerons pas notre pays. Nous trouverons une solution. Espérons que les discussions de Calgary nous serviront de base à une conciliation avec le Québec. Je pense parler au nom de tous les membres de cette assemblée quand je dis que nous voulons conserver le Québec au sein du Canada.

[Translation]

If I had the solution to keep Canada united, I would immediately share it with every Canadian, but I do not doubt that we will succeed in finding a solution. If we were to retain only a single positive thing from the Calgary discussions, it would be our commitment to national unity. But I know that we will not abandon our country; we will find a solution. Let us hope that the Calgary discussions will serve us as a basis for conciliation with Quebec. I think that I speak for all members of this Assembly when I say that we want to keep Quebec within the Canadian federation.

[English]

We are prepared to recognize the very unique character of Quebec society. That includes its French-speaking majority, its culture and its tradition of civil law. In fact, I acknowledge that each province and

territory has a unique character which contributes to the diversity of our great country.

* (1110)

I would like to speak for a moment on behalf of the constituents of Gladstone, many of whom speak French as their first language and many of whom are among Canada's First Nation. I believe that I am representing the will of my constituents when I speak in favour of this framework. The French-speaking constituents of Gladstone can identify with the people of Quebec who want their unique character acknowledged. They too are unique and appreciate the differences between themselves and their neighbours, yet, in contrast to many people of Quebec, who would have Canada divided along cultural and linguistic lines, we embrace these differences and even welcome them. They think that it is fantastic that they can send their children to a daycare where they can speak both French and English. They know they are equipping their children with valuable linguistic skills which will serve them immeasurably in the future.

Par conséquent, devant chaque membre de cette grande assemblée je voudrais apporter mon soutien aux discussions de Calgary sur l'unité nationale. Chacun des sept points de la déclaration démontre bien notre volonté de garder un Canada uni, aujourd'hui et pour toujours. Le Canada est un pays tolérant et juste, ses citoyens veulent reconnaître les différences de ses différentes communautés et cultures.

“Nos consultations sur le Cadre de discussion de Calgary nous ont permis de constater que les Manitobains s'intéressent passionnément à leur pays et à son avenir. Les Manitobains veulent que le Canada reste uni et ils tiennent à trouver des mesures efficaces pour atteindre cet objectif, en particulier pour montrer au Québec qu'il est le bienvenu en tant que partenaire important au sein de la fédération canadienne. Le Cadre de discussion de Calgary amorce bien la recherche visant à exprimer l'identité et les valeurs communes, ce qui aidera la famille canadienne à demeurer unie.”

J'appuie les propositions visant à améliorer le dialogue et la compréhension entre les Canadiens, celles-ci étant conformes tant à l'esprit d'unité qui

anime le Cadre de discussion de Calgary qu'à la détermination des Manitobains à faire que tous les Canadiens, les Québécois compris, se sentent les bienvenus au sein de la fédération.

[Translation]

Consequently, before each member of this great Assembly, I would like to lend my support to the Calgary discussions on national unity. Each of the seven points of the declaration clearly shows our desire to maintain a united Canada today and always. Canada is a tolerant and fair country. Its citizens want to acknowledge the differences of its different communities and cultures.

“Our consultations on the Calgary Framework have convinced us that Manitobans care passionately about their country and its future. Manitobans want Canada to stay united and are committed to finding effective measures to achieve this goal, in particular to embrace Quebec as a vital and welcome partner in the Canadian federation. The Calgary Framework is a good beginning in the search for an expression of common identity and values that will help the Canadian family stay together.”

I support the resolutions intended to improve dialogue and understanding among Canadians. These are in keeping with the spirit of unity that animates the Calgary Framework as well as with the determination of Manitobans to ensure that all Canadians, including Quebecers, feel welcome within the federation.

[English]

In closing, I would like to again stress my strong wish that my granddaughter will grow up in a united Canada and raise her children in a united Canada.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to be able to put on the record a few concerns that I have on a very important document, and I think the member for Gladstone (Mr. Rocan) said it best when he ended his remarks. It is very clear that the debate about Canadian unity is one of a very emotional nature, that we all want to do our part in preserving what is so dear for us and future generations, and that is, of course, our beautiful country which the United

Nations on more than one occasion has deemed Canada as the No. 1 country in the world to live. I have always thought that if people could experience other countries, you would get that much better of an appreciation of what Canada is, in fact, all about.

Madam Speaker, the Meech Lake, Charlottetown, and now the Calgary Framework, is an issue which I have followed very closely ever since I was actually first elected. I would go back to the '88 provincial election when I was at a town hall meeting in Brooklands which was at the time a part of the constituency and which I used to represent here. The real passionate plea at that time, or the passionate debate, was about the Meech Lake Accord. When I had spoken first on constitutional matters, the biggest issue for me at that time during the provincial election was trying to have dialogue with constituents, or voters at the time, on the importance of Meech Lake not necessarily passing.

Meech Lake failed primarily, Madam Speaker, because of concerns that were highlighted within the aboriginal community. The former member for Rupertsland, with the eagle feather, played a very significant role in the ultimate outcome of Meech Lake. But at the time, back in 1988 when I was out on the campaign trails, what I was arguing was that as a Canadian it is important that we have strong national programs. That is, in essence, one of the primary reasons why I could not support the Meech Lake Accord.

Then we went into the Charlottetown Accord, Madam Speaker, and the Charlottetown Accord, what I had seen, was an offloading again of responsibilities. Now, the problem was that there were many positive things with the Charlottetown Accord. The reform of the Senate I think was a very positive thing; the acknowledgement of our task force in dealing with Meech Lake through the Canada clause which, in essence, gave Quebec what it was hoping to achieve, or at least some from within Quebec were hoping to achieve, and that was the distinct society clause.

Now, there were positive things, but, Madam Speaker, when I weighed the pros and the cons, there really was not much difference for me personally

between Meech Lake and Charlottetown when it came to the whole issue of national unity because in both the documents that I had seen, both talked about the devolution of powers. They were both talking about, here is now what the provinces are going to be taking responsibility for.

Some of those caused great concern. One of the biggest ones, for example, was the whole idea of the opting-out clause and how Manitoba was not going to benefit by allowing an opting out of potential national programs because we do not, whether we like it or not, necessarily have the same sort of Treasury as a province like British Columbia or Alberta or even, to a certain degree, Ontario. Hopefully, someday we will have the ability to have and compete with provinces like that in terms of that Treasury. Hopefully, that day will come sooner as opposed to later, but even if that day was there, Madam Speaker, if we were at that stage today, I would argue that there is always going to be a need for us to ensure that the national government has the ability to be able to bring into being national programs that are going to be afforded to each and every province and that there are going to be some standards.

I attended my first parliamentary conference actually just last summer and a part of the agenda was dealing with the Constitution. At the time, we had parliamentarians from across Canada that were sitting down there, and I expressed my concerns with respect to health care. I believe that, ultimately, whether I choose to live in British Columbia, Manitoba, Newfoundland, Quebec, or wherever in Canada, there is going to be some sort of a standard of a health care system in which I am going to be able to enjoy the privilege of being able to have access to it. Madam Speaker, where I might be in terms of my economic strata would not matter in terms of the types of treatment that I would be able to get, the type of treatment which is important to me as an individual Canadian.

* (1120)

I listened to what the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer) were saying, and both of them said some things that

somewhat appeased my initial reaction to the actual resolution. When I heard the Premier, for example, talk about that he disagrees, why it is that we are challenging or we are taking intervener status with respect to the Supreme Court standing on the whole question of seceding for the province of Quebec.

Well, Madam Speaker, I agree wholeheartedly with the Premier. I believe that it is not up to just the Province of Quebec to make a unilateral decision. I believe that it is not between the province of Quebec and the national government to make a bilateral decision on the future of Canada. This is something that is critical to all of us, and we all must have a role to play.

It has been made reference in terms of how we all tried get a better understanding of what is in the Calgary declaration. Some of us met with students. I had the wonderful opportunity to meet with, I believe it was, some eighty-nine or eighty Grade 11 students over at Sisler High School. At the end of it, one of the questions that I asked them was: Do you think other Canadians should have a role on whether Quebec separates or not? Out of the group I had 74 that said yes, and five had indicated no.

What I see is that the youth, in essence, do have a fairly good idea and do reflect what a majority of Manitobans want; that is that they want to see a united Canada. They also want to play a part in ensuring that there is going to be a united Canada. So the Premier (Mr. Filmon) pleased me when I heard him talk about the importance of making sure that all Canadians have their say on the whole issue of the unity debate.

Madam Speaker, I was really pleased with the Leader of the New Democrat Party's (Mr. Doer) position with respect to the social programming. He made reference to the importance of having a strong national government. I like to think that I am just as proud to be a part of Manitoba as anyone else inside this Chamber, but at the same time I recognize, as I believe that the New Democratic leader recognized, the importance of having a strong national government. So I think that what the Leader of the New Democratic Party was saying was in essence what I believe is so accurate with respect to our important national programs that are there.

Mr. Ben Sveinson, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

If you want to unify Canada, you talk to Canadians on what makes them feel good about being a Canadian. There are many different things, hockey being one of them, as many of the students would have told me. Another one being health care, something in which I have made reference to. Well, if you provide good, strong, national programs, Mr. Acting Speaker, you will find that more and more people will want to be a part of Canada, that we do not have to appeal to people living in Quebec with threats, *per se*. There are enough wonderful things out there that we should be able to appeal to people that these are all the benefits of being in Canada, that they should not necessarily have to be threatened.

When I look at the whole issue of the arguments, I should say, for separating Quebec from Canada, it is very disappointing. You know, the member—I think it was from St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh)—quoted Mr. Bouchard in some of the speeches that he has given. There is a lot of passionate, emotional debates that are occurring in the province of Quebec, and a lot of it is misinformation, and it is unfortunate to see that because I will tell you with every individual that I have had the opportunity to talk to from the province of Quebec, it has all been a very positive experience.

I was really impressed with the one young lady that was at the referendum rally that we had at The Forks who talked about that she, prior to coming to Manitoba, was in favour of Quebec nationalism, that Quebec needed to go its own way. But, after living in the province of Manitoba for a short period of time, she had changed her opinion. She had seen the benefits of having a unified country.

My sister, who happens also to be a constituent of mine, has a young lady by the name of Annie who lives with her, and she is from Quebec, a wonderful young lady who talks with a great deal of pride about her heritage within the province of Quebec, but at no time has she ever given me the impression that Quebec should separate from the rest of Canada. I think what we really need to do is to educate. As I say, if you are a Canadian and you go to another country, quite often, especially if you take a European tour or you go to a Third World country, you will come back and you will

have a better appreciation of Canada. Well, I would argue that if we were to open our doors and promote student exchanges between the province of Quebec and other Canadian provinces that you will see the young people of Quebec, leading, I would argue, the need to remain in Canada. That is really what this whole debate should be about is talking about the wonders of remaining in Canada.

Hopefully what we will see is the Bloc Quebecois, who I have very little time and respect for, do the right thing and not field candidates if in fact they lose yet another referendum. I am getting tired of the referendums. Are we going to continue to see referendum after referendum in the province of Quebec until maybe you have a charismatic leader and the other people are hated or the federalists are hated for a snapshot in time, and then for some unforeseen reason the No side or the Yes side prevails, and then that allows Quebec to argue their case for separation? Well, if we can have referendum after referendum, I would take it then that individuals like Mr. Bouchard and the separatists would agree that there should be another referendum any time the federalists want to have a referendum to bring Quebec back into Canada, Mr. Acting Speaker. The reason why I say that is, of course, there is a responsibility of the federal government to get better clarification on what sort of process, if there should be any sort of a process, that would allow for something of this nature to occur. If there is going to be that process, I would hope and I would trust that process would allow for participation of all Canadians, not just Canadians from any defined region.

I really believe that there are some shortcomings with respect to the Calgary Framework. It concerns me that I have yet to see something which clearly indicates that there is the need to go beyond just shared responsibility. I acknowledge that in the Calgary Framework it talks about shared responsibility, and I think that is important, but I do not see anything that really strengthens the argument to have that strong national presence.

That does cause some concern for me, Mr. Acting Speaker, so even though I am inclined to support the resolution, I do have some very strong reservations. If in fact this was not a resolution for a framework, I do

not know if I would be able to support a constitutional amendment of this nature without getting some sort of assurances that you are going to have a national government that is going to be able to have the power to have strong national programs.

What does please me is there is, at the very least, a sense of co-operation, and I think we need to see more of that. You know, another one of the questions I had asked the student youth group was one of trying to gauge their opinion on a number of areas like: In your opinion, which level of government should play the leading role in the following? There was no doubt that the federal government should be playing the leading role, for example, in immigration. When it came to labour training, again, the province came out ahead on this in terms of leading responsibility. But when I asked a question of health care, 23 students said, well, the federal government should be playing the leading role; 22 students said the provincial government should be playing the leading role; the majority said both should be sharing the responsibility.

* (1130)

I thought that was very interesting in the sense that, you know, the province is responsible for administrating; the federal government does have responsibilities also. So when I hear the Premier of the province not standing up and arguing cash transfers over tax point transfers, Mr. Acting Speaker, that does cause concern for me. I will acknowledge that he does argue the federal cutbacks, but the reason why he tends to argue that particular point is in order to pass off the blame of what is happening in health care onto the federal government.

But when I asked the questions last June on which one he favours more, the tax points or the cash transfer, this government, whether it was the Premier (Mr. Filmon) or the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) or the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik), gave a clear indication that they do not have any problem with the tax points. Well, that does cause some concern especially when I believe most Canadians want to see the federal government playing the leading role when it comes to preserving our health care.

Environment, again, here is another one where a good size majority of people said—I should not say

majority, the one that received the most support was that both governments should act co-operatively: 21 said the province, 19 said feds, 37 said both. When I asked education, both won again; you had 19 with the federal, 24 with the provincial, and 34 with both.

Well, the reason why I say that, Mr. Acting Speaker, is because I want to acknowledge that one of the positives in this Calgary Framework is in fact the declaration that we do need to see the different levels of government working together. I am hoping that we will not see that particular clause manipulated and worked with the other clause that says whatever powers the province of Quebec be given, that all provinces be given, and then the province of Quebec is used as a tool in order to justify the taking away of powers from Ottawa that ultimately could lead to the detriment of strong national programs or strong things that the federal government should be playing a role in and that disappearing in order to try to justify or to appease individuals that are using Quebec sovereignty as a lever in order to gain more responsibilities away from Ottawa. So that is, as I say, a serious concern.

The Manitoba process which we have gone through with respect to the Calgary Framework in essence does please me. I think one of the strongest benefits from that is the whole issue with our aboriginal people. I think that is something that is positive. Obviously it was a slap in the face to our aboriginal people in the way in which Meech Lake came into being, and that was clearly demonstrated when we had hundreds of individuals fill this Chamber and the grounds during the rolling of the dice on the Meech Lake.

It was gratifying to see that we had good input, it would appear, from the aboriginal community and so many other Manitobans. I would applaud in particular the Chair, Mr. Wally Fox-Decent, who I know has been there in so many ways for all Manitobans trying to ensure that the voice of the people will in fact be heard and taken into account in the final drafting of the Calgary Framework. My gut feeling is that Mr. Fox-Decent's work is still not quite done. We still might have to be going back to him. I think that he has garnered the respect of every member inside this Chamber, and his services still might be required in helping Manitoba get over the constitutional crisis.

If I could give one additional plug to Mr. Fox-Decent in terms of my strong feelings, as I have already indicated in my speech, we need to really reach out, I believe, to those that I believe are part of the majority, but maybe it is that silent majority, Mr. Acting Speaker, that want to see a very strong national government and for that national government to be better defined and its roles to be better defined in any sort of constitutional change that we might see anytime in the future in Canada. That is very important to me. I know that it is very important to my constituents, but when I look at the Calgary Framework, I believe that it would be irresponsible of me to do anything else but support the resolution that is coming that we have before us.

Having said that, I really want to emphasize the fact that we cannot sit back and cater to those individuals that want to pry everything that they possibly can away from the national level in order that the provinces can have more power. There has got to be rationale for it. When I looked at the Charlottetown Accord, I did not support it, even though there were things that were in it that would have been positive for Manitoba. When I look at the Meech Lake Accord from the first day of my campaigning back in 1988, the offloading of responsibilities caused great concern.

I think that we have to acknowledge that we need to have a strong national government that has the power to be able to bring in programs that will do more for unifying Canada than any sort of economic blackmailing, whether it is today in Quebec or tomorrow in other potential provinces, and if we do this right, then we will not have to worry about Canada breaking up in the future. It is a country definitely worth saving as the United Nations has pointed out on more than one occasion. We are, in fact, the best country in the world in which to live.

Thank you, with those few words, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Hon. David Newman (Minister of Energy and Mines): Mr. Acting Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak in favour of this resolution.

I want to congratulate the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and House leaders and opposition leaders for agreeing to this debate on this very critical resolution. Elected

members of provincial and territorial Legislatures have much to contribute to the Canadian unity debate. Individual legislators have the capacity to provide useful, innovative and heartfelt input. On issues of critical importance, such as keeping our country united, legislators can and should be freed from the constraints of party discipline. In the context of a free debate on national unity, the role of the legislator is admirably suited to ensure reasoned, responsible and representative discussion.

The legislative assemblies in all of our provinces and territories represent all Canadians. Each legislator is accountable politically to constituents and by oath to the institutions of democracy. There is a professionalism amongst legislators which allows most business of Legislatures to be achieved by agreement. Most laws on our statute books are products of this practice.

A quality shared by legislators universally is a love of country. This emotional and spiritual foundation is more important and decisive, I submit, than even reasoned arguments supporting unity. Our legislative assemblies are democratic institutions founded in British parliamentary tradition going back centuries. Every member who speaks in these revered institutions has a record in Hansard for future generations. In effect, every legislator in Canada is part of Canada's recorded history. All members, whether cabinet ministers, upper benchers or in opposition, have this opportunity to engage in debate on Canadian unity through the instrument of this resolution.

* (1140)

There is ample precedent for unanimously approving resolutions in this Legislature of Manitoba. Largely unnoticed, such resolutions from time to time are of considerable motivational and substantive importance. There is always a sense of achievement amongst members when party differences in the firm hand of the Whip are set aside for a worthy enough cause.

I believe this resolution is worthy enough to attract unanimous support, and I congratulate the Manitoba Legislative Task Force on Canadian Unity for their efforts in developing the report resulting in this resolution. I also congratulate all Manitobans who

shared their ideas, experiences and stories with this task force.

This debate is going to ensure that every Manitoban has a voice on Canadian unity through an elected representative who has compelling reasons to listen to his or her constituents. The collective input of all legislators permits an informed analysis and discussion of the current ideas for resolving our Canadian unity challenges. Mr. Acting Speaker, these members, elected by their constituents and accountable to Canadians present and future, experienced in debating and developing consensus, accustomed to media and lobbyist pressures and subject to conflict-of-interest laws and rules and customs, are ideally positioned to express views on this issue.

A lot has been heard from constitutional experts, lawyers, labour leaders, journalists, professors, lobbyists, business leaders and organizations, premiers, the Prime Minister and several selected federal cabinet ministers. Little has been heard from legislators. Allowing their input means that Canadians will not be faced, as they were previously, with referenda perhaps deciding the future of our country, with their freedom of expression entrusted to a few spokespeople. This may be fine in a commercial negotiation but not in a debate about the future of our country, where there is no ratification vote and no clear and transparent mandate entrusted to those few.

There has been considerable talk about having a constituent assembly for the purpose of articulating the views of ordinary Canadians. Who is an ordinary Canadian? Categorically no group represents all of the different parts and peoples of this country better than legislators. The conclusion is obvious. The legislative assemblies in this country may be far from perfect, but they are the best available means to discuss this issue and to ensure the views of Canadians are heard and expressed in a focused, solution-orientated process.

What are the risks? When views are expressed on a emotional issue like this one there will be misunderstandings. There is the risk of offending the feelings of those who disagree. In our western democracies, fear of offending someone is not an accepted reason for discouraging free and responsible expression. Is it possible to achieve unity without

candid discussions through our elected officials? Can it be avoided without jeopardizing our future? That risk was already taken on that unforgettable October night of the last referendum when avoidance resulted in a near loss.

It is appropriate to act now with this resolution. The more co-operation there is amongst legislators in approving resolutions like this one across the country, the greater likelihood a consensus for the benefit of all Canadians, present and future, can be achieved.

I wanted to share some feelings and some thoughts about this great country of ours, Canada. In my judgment, Mr. Acting Speaker, no other country in the world has achieved our quality of life and opportunities with so little pain and suffering. We are the most privileged and fortunate people on earth. With this perspective in applying universal moral and religious principles, let me, with a view to opening hearts and minds to a solution, examine what has become a crisis in paradise, undermining the growth, stability, and unity of our home, family, and model society. Then I will offer some suggestions to carrying out the intent of the resolution that I am supporting.

I ask myself: does the concept and result of this resolution contribute, on balance, to the Canadian family of peoples? I disregard the notion of equity. I disregard the possible legal interpretations. I emphasize the importance of unity and continuing dialogue. I emphasize accommodating the unfilled needs and aspirations of Quebecers, Metis, Indian, and Inuit Canadians. I de-emphasize, for the time being, the needs and aspirations of other Canadians. I then apply the principle: a human being obtains a proper rule of action by looking on neighbours as himself. I hope Manitobans and other Canadians concerned about those Canadians getting an advantage will then understand and get a feeling for those needs and aspirations.

There is a quotation that had quite an impact on me from a text called, *Oneness: Great Principles Shared By All Religions*, edited by Jeffrey Moses, Ballantyne Books. The quotation is that the joy of living in society is that each person can derive benefits from every other person's efforts; each person contributes a little and then receives the vast benefit of society's achievement.

I trust the people of Quebec, the Inuit, Metis, and Indian Canadians to be responsible members of the Canadian family over the long haul and, in co-operation with Canadians from all regions, to promote and develop a more mature and united Canadian nation for the betterment of us all, as individuals, as an example to the rest of the world.

Mr. Acting Speaker, national unity discussions are not business discussions between competitors. They are discussions between members of the same family, just as between partners, a relationship is a fiduciary relationship. The highest standards of trust and full disclosure are demanded in such a relationship. No one wins if one party or more wins or loses materially more than the others.

It is time for family members to unite and together meet the global challenges which threaten all of us on this planet. It is time to focus outward on the less fortunate in the world, not inward on the most fortunate. It is time for all Canadians with their rich diversity to dream together, to imagine our future together, to visualize what we can be together in a united Canada.

I attended a conference with my wife, Brenda, in the late fall, November 7, 8 and 9, 1996, and it was a symposium at the College universitaire de Saint-Boniface. The topic was Canada: Horizons 2000, Redefining Canada: A Prospective Look at Our Country in the 21st Century. Sitting through those days and hearing many of the learned lawyers and constitutional experts and other Canadians, what left a lasting impression on me were the words of a well-known Canadian writer, philosopher, lecturer and cultural historian, Bruce W. Powe. I am going to share with you what had such an impact on me at that time at some length, because it is an emotional backdrop to the state of my thinking and feelings at this time.

* (1150)

Madam Speaker in the Chair

In his address, he said: We must begin to imagine a whole country and we must have the imagination to once again conceive and recognize and elevate and evoke the patterns that are and could be developing

here. Madam Speaker, he went on to say: But first we must define the true imagination. Too often in our money-addled, brute realistic debates, we push away the idea that the imagination is the beginning of all things human. We tend to think of imagination as fantasy, as the talent that takes us out of this world. We tend to think of imagination as representing an escapist or unreality principle. We think of dreams more in the sense of daydreaming, of distraction, than we do of some energy essential and vital to our existence.

Imagination is the art of seeing new patterns or a pattern that was not there before. It is the ability to see what is yet to be and what could be. Imagination is creative vision. It is the mind creating alternatives, open spaces, seeing possibilities, recharging the spirit with hope. The imagination grasps the past, the present and the future, all at once. Indeed, I would agree that the primary power the imagination is found in, connection, sympathy, wholeness, passion, cohesion, yearning, the power of dreams and images to transform us.

He goes on to say: For me imaginative vision precedes politics. All discussion of the division of powers, of the economic structuring or restructuring of society, follow the essential fire of an imaginative vision, a glimpse of something higher, better, fuller, fairer, richer. Without vision, all talk of politics and country is reduced to mechanics and to enter the unknown with a sense of purpose also takes imagination. The imagination is the key to the spirit, to empathy, to seeing pattern and incongruity, to reclaiming cohesiveness, to augury and omen, to the realm of soulful questioning and contemplation of our mystery, to recognizing that there is always a person behind every word, in every place, on every street, in every town or city, in every situation. The imagination seals us in a covenant with the world.

It takes the world back into ourselves, inspiring us to know more, to find more rhymes, synchronicities, those endless connections that ring us. Without that visionary inkling, which is the mind's openness to alternatives, we will be, in Canada, a country without strangeness, little more than another greedy place, a seething and frustrating and perhaps eventually violent society, another spot torn apart by insidious ignorance and myopia, another footnote to the saga of some other

countries in the world, some minor addendum to other histories and destinies.

If that happens, what will we say to our children? What will we say to them, that we could not imagine alternatives, that we did not feel it was important to fight for what is here, what could be here, that we did not believe enough, were not willing to risk enough, that we did not speak and that we did not dare ourselves to come up with more?

Quebec needs Canada because Quebec provides sparks of challenge, currents of passion, while Canada itself continues to provide fields, larger contexts of passion. One without the other would enfeeble the whole, leaving in pieces the traces of the grander, latent scheme, the light state, fixed yet unfixed, a new kind of collage country made of aboriginal dream songs and fierce polemics, private visions and media publicity.

If we could see that our light state may in fact be a condition of receptivity, of openness, of living without borderlines, of trust and the willingness to talk and to debate, then we may say that breakdown is part of the process, setback itself a kind of gift. We may then step back from apocalyptic gloom and cataclysmic finale and the rapacities of consumption and greed. We may acknowledge that the nation state is disappearing and a new model is decentralized, metamorphic, mythic, planetary, complex.

If we could see that our state is built from variety, not uniformity, and that unity must be implicit and not explicit, then we may say that what we have is a tremendous space of light and air with a grounding in questions of sympathy and justice. If we could see that many people share the hunger for justice, for the human mind and sensorium to ponder and grasp the whole issue of what it means to have a life of quality, then the fear that accompanies technological change could be transformed into an influx of intuitions, thoughts, resources and needs.

If we could see the joy that comes from authentic communication with our friends, colleagues, acquaintances, associates, sources, a communication that sometimes transcends habits and inertia and fears to become a communion, then we may say this process

of reaching out to one another may be one of the ways we keep learning to be fully human.

He ends with a prayer. I will end with a prayer for Canada: May the ability to see many points of view keep us gentle; may the ability to see a future keep us bold; may the ability to recognize and reject cynicism, hardhearted inequities and needless cruelties keep us compassionate and hopeful; may the ability to perceive patterns that are yet to be fully realized keep us clear in our hearts and minds; may the ability to communicate and face facts and yet dream new dreams to imagine fuller lives give us the sweet strength that we need.

That prayer and those quotations move me to the depths of my being. They inspire me. The older I get, the more I become in touch with my feelings and feel the power of love and the presence of God in each of us.

I have come to the realization that considerations and beliefs about Canadian unity which have dominated discussion for decades are unhelpful and are a distraction from the fundamental factors which hold this country together. These unhelpful distractions include believing a written constitution creates a unified country, being preoccupied about words in a constitution, relying on lawyers and constitutional experts and media pundits to voice and purport to have the qualities necessary to solve our Canadian unity problems. Even making them part of the discussion is worrisome, relying on Prime Ministers and premiers to negotiate a solution.

So what are the fundamental factors I believe will hold our country together? Permit me the privilege of suggesting the following: All elected leaders, municipal, provincial, territorial, First Nations, Metis, Inuit, governments and organizations commit to feel espoused and practise the noble sentiment set out and celebrated in the resolution before us; do so day in and day out in relation to each other and the federal government.

I repeat, the sentiments in that resolution include Quebec as a vital and welcome partner; better recognition and full participation by aboriginal peoples; all Canadians are equal; Canada is graced by a

diversity, tolerance, compassion and an equality of opportunity without rival in the world.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Is there leave to permit the honourable minister to complete his remarks? [agreed]

Mr. Newman: Thank you, honourable members. Respect for diversity and equality; governments in Canada working in partnership, co-operatively, with flexibility; ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the federation; work together; serve Canadians.

Lip service is not enough. This will require discipline and hard work until it becomes heartfelt, habitual and a generally expected standard of conduct to dialogue with other Canadians from the heart about our genuine personal needs, aspirations and desires.

Celebrate and share success stories of collaboration between governments and Canada; courtesy to and mutual respect amongst elected officials. Whether an Indian chief, a Metis Federation president, a mayor of a municipality, a premier, the Prime Minister, an MLA or a councillor, together they represent all Canadians.

Respect for each other is respect for the people they represent.

All Canadians doing unto each other as you would have them do unto you; walk in each other's moccasins; patience and determination in our quest to build a multicultural, multiethnic society together.

The totality of the actions and expressions of each Canadian but especially elected leaders can, in the aggregate, and will, determine whether Canada will fulfill its destiny.

I urge all honourable members to support this resolution and, thereafter, to live it, breathe it, be guided by it in our daily lives in relation to each other and other Canadians. Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The hour being 12 noon, as previously agreed, this motion will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), who has 12 minutes remaining.

I am leaving the Chair with the understanding that this House will reconvene at 1:30 p.m. this afternoon.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, March 19, 1998

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