

7 p.m.

Monday, May 27, 1991

[Deputy Chairman: Mr. Schumacher]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We're going live via ABC channel 10, it being 7 p.m., for the resumption of the hearings of the select special committee of the Alberta Legislature on constitutional reform. This is an all-party committee and is represented by Progressive Conservative Party, New Democratic Party, and Liberal Party members of the Legislature. Its purpose is to consult with Albertans as to their views with regard to Alberta's place in a new or restructured Canada. During this week the Assembly has been adjourned for the purpose of allowing the committee to divide into two parts in order to cover as much of Alberta as possible in public hearings that commenced last Friday afternoon and will end this coming Saturday afternoon. As we all know, today we are in Fort McMurray, tomorrow in Grande Prairie, Wednesday in Hinton, Thursday in Red Deer, and Friday and Saturday in Edmonton. That's this half of the committee.

We were very pleased with the quality and the quantity of presentations received this afternoon and are looking forward to another useful meeting with Albertans here in Fort McMurray this evening.

Our first presenter will be Danny Law on behalf of the Catholic school board. The Chair would invite Mr. Law to come to the table at this time.

MR. LAW: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Welcome. With Mr. Law is Mr. McKinney. You're also welcome, Mr. McKinney.

MR. LAW: I believe you all have a copy of the brief.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Well, Mr. Law, we have allotted 15 minutes, but because I believe there are only two more people after you who have indicated a desire to present so far, we will not hold you strictly to the 15 minutes.

MR. LAW: Well, I will try to do my best.

MR. CHUMIR: You can go 16.

MR. LAW: I can go 16. Thank you.

Welcome to the city of Fort McMurray. Thank you again for this opportunity to address the Select Special Committee on Constitutional Reform, the all-party committee of the Alberta Legislature.

The Fort McMurray Roman Catholic separate school district No. 32 currently enjoys a special mandate within the provincial educational enterprise. The purpose of this presentation is to enlighten the committee on the value of this mandate.

The Fort McMurray Catholic schools have served students of the community and the region since 1936. Today our Catholic schools serve 3,700 students, ECS through grade 12. This is approximately 41 percent of the school-age population of the city of Fort McMurray. The school district employs 330 full-time staff, of which 220 are professionally certified to instruct students. There are eight schools: one high school, one junior high, four elementary, and two elementary/junior high schools. Two ancillary facilities include an administration centre and a plant maintenance and operations centre. The most recent

school was constructed in 1984; however, between 1975 and 1984 the school district built six of the eight schools. The original St. Johns school was built in 1937 and modernized in 1986. The school system is governed by a board of trustees elected for a three-year term, and of course the last election was held in October of '89.

The value of this background information is to convey to the committee the historical context of the Fort McMurray Catholic schools. The school district is a long-standing member of the many service groups in the city of Fort McMurray. The school district has successfully responded to and managed the challenge of two distinct growth periods associated with oil sands development, respectively the 1970s and the 1980s. One of our key organizational values states: "Each person is a unique gift from God; Christian witness and service are our gifts to one another." This value recognizes the spiritual dimension in all people. Our Catholic schools try to explicitly nourish the spiritual dimension through relationships and a service focus that characterizes how we work with clients and the personalized service offered within the schools.

Another one of our organizational values states: "The Fort McMurray Catholic school system belongs to the community." This value is important to us and to the community. We believe that the Fort McMurray schools will be here to serve the Catholic school residents of Fort McMurray many years in the future. We further believe that our educational enterprise can facilitate and assist in future community growth by ensuring that a strong and quality system of education is available to community residents of tomorrow.

The purposes. The current mandate assigned school boards by the provincial Legislature allows boards to provide educational services which are derived from the needs of the resident child as determined by the elected trustees. School boards, for example, are accorded considerable authority to develop and modify curricula, undertake cultural and recreational activities, requisition fiscal resources, deploy human resources, et cetera. Such authority is consistent with the view that educational services be determined to reflect local needs. While school boards are creatures of the Legislature, their effectiveness, if not their very existence, is significantly influenced by their responsiveness to the local electorate. One very critical measure of responsiveness is the extent to which the electorate perceives educational services as matching the needs of their children.

In general, the educational mission is to meet individual and social needs. The former includes the physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and spiritual needs of each student central to the development of a positive self-concept, seeing oneself as worthy, wanted, and desirable. The latter includes nurturing a productive environment, preparing members for the assumption of useful social roles, developing effective communication modes among its members, developing common ideas and meanings, limiting through law the members' behavioral range, and establishing procedures to ensure continuity and improvement.

There are two distinct components to public schooling; both are publicly funded. They emanated historically from Protestant and Roman Catholic traditions but may be essentially nonconfessional. The first chronologically established is termed "the public school"; the second, "the separate school." A declaration of faith, Protestant or Roman Catholic, determines residency in the separate school component. The public school is designed to accommodate the secular needs of the child. When its orientation is of the Protestant or Roman Catholic traditions or when it is sufficiently petitioned, it may also accommodate the spiritual needs of the child. Separate schools are created by ministerial

decree and by virtue of the constitutionally guaranteed historical right and privilege afforded in a community to the Protestant or Roman Catholic minority on establishment.

What distinguishes Catholic schools provincially is their common approach to Catholic school identity and leadership. Purposes are articulated locally in school board policy. Catholic education in Fort McMurray is a valued opportunity. The school district educates 41 percent of the school-age population in Fort McMurray. About 10 to 15 percent of the students are non-Catholic and enter the Catholic schools to gain Christian spiritual formation and become a member of faith community, to seek a positive and orderly school climate, to achieve academically and build the self-worth of the individual.

7:10

What is valued by the Fort McMurray community? There are three distinct dimensions of Catholic schools: teaching all subjects well and, especially, teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ; forming community; and serving others after the example of Jesus. These are essential qualities. The Fort McMurray Catholic schools are guided by a mission statement contained in appendix 1, an organizational values statement contained in appendix 2, and a purpose statement contained in appendix 3.

Within a Catholic school one should find an emphasis on integrated learning; the development of a sense of history; art, speech and drama; and service. Catholic schools complement the values that are promoted at home. The students from homes with value systems congruent to the values of the schools are likely to benefit most from the Catholic schools. In Fort McMurray, Catholic schools seem to be able to overcome and compensate for the disadvantaged backgrounds of some students who do not receive enough support in their homes. The school district has adopted a pastoral care approach to working with families, students, and staff. To accomplish this direction, the school district has broadened its service base to include social, physical, intellectual, aesthetic, spiritual, and family dimensions of schooling. Community service is a unique offering of the senior high school religious education program. As well, our Catholic schools stretch into the community by undertaking many service functions involving the youth. Examples of these activities include Santa's Anonymous, cystic fibrosis, the food bank, et cetera.

The school climate, ethos, or culture is a significant contributor to student learning and productivity. A recurrent theme in the research on effective schools is that good schools have a sense of community, which has a positive effect on the quality of life for both teachers and students. The culture of Catholic schools supports the religious and academic norms of parents by establishing a strong academic curriculum, by having clear expectations for learners, and by creating a communal atmosphere among staff and students conducive to the social and spiritual development of the students. Our parents and communities speak highly of the order and deportment of the Catholic school students. Our student academic achievement is greater than the provincial average in elementary schools and in most subjects in secondary schools.

Further, Catholic schools extend beyond the schools themselves to include parents and other adults from the larger community of which the schools are a part. This is one significant reason that the school district operates three designated community schools pursuant to the provincial guidelines on community schools.

The significance of the protection of minority rights for Catholic separate schools is essential to maintain and foster the growth of the purposes described above.

The constitutional framework. There is a legal basis to Catholic separate schools in Alberta. Justification for retaining the rights, powers, and privileges currently held by separate Catholic school systems can be posited from at least two different yet equally significant positions, the legal and the ethical. Regarding the first, legal rights of separate schools in Alberta are defined in three distinct pieces of legislation: one, section 93 of the British North America Act 1867; two, chapter 29 of the Ordinances of the Northwest Territories 1901; three, section 17 of the Alberta Act 1905.

In view of possible constitutional changes, each of these warrant elaboration. Relevant parts of section 93 of the British North America Act 1867 read as follows. Mr. Chairman, I would refrain from going through all these at this stage. I'm going to the summary on page 10.

The Fort McMurray Roman Catholic separate school district No. 32 operates on a strong foundation with the community and surrounding region. The special mandate is central to the provision of public education in the Roman Catholic tradition. It enjoys the support of other religious denominations within the community. To alter the constitutional framework which protects the rights of Catholic separate schools would have a major impact on the defined purposes of Catholic separate schools. Therefore, the Fort McMurray Roman Catholic separate school district No. 32 recommends that the Select Special Committee on Constitutional Reform ensure that any Alberta involvement in the Canadian constitutional review process include initiatives for the protection of the separate school rights presently afforded to Albertans under the Canada Act 1982, section 93.

Mr. Chairman, that is our brief, and at this time I would like to again thank you for the opportunity to present it to you in this committee.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Law.

I guess to summarize, you're a strong proponent of the status quo as it affects education in our present constitutional arrangements.

MR. LAW: That is correct, Mr. Chairman.

MS BETKOWSKI: I'd like to . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes, Nancy.

MS BETKOWSKI: Nice to see you again. We had your counterpart here from the public system this afternoon, and we were having quite an extensive discussion about several issues in education. One of them was really about French language education, which I know is something that your school trustees and this board in particular have had some experience with, and in particular the issue of section 23. Now, I know we've had the consultation going around the province with respect to section 23. One of the comments that we've heard was, "Commit to French," - I think I'm paraphrasing it properly, what we heard today - "Commit to French, but don't overlay yet another set of school boards on the implementation of section 23." I'd be interested in your comments with respect to that suggestion.

MR. LAW: What we have in our system is that at St. John's junior high school, we have a three-track system. We have the French immersion, the English, and the Francophone program. I believe we have approximately 62 students in the Francophone program, and that was initiated two years ago, I believe, at the request of the local Francophone population and done to meet the requirements of chapter 23. Yes, we are awaiting the report from the government. At this stage, being the end of the school year almost, we are trying to find out what the enrollment will be for next year, because what kind of expansion are we looking at? We certainly don't intend to drop it, but at the same time, of course, you have to be realistic with regards to where numbers warrant. We intend to meet our obligations, and we will carry on doing so. If the numbers are sufficient, then we'll take that step as it comes along.

MS BETKOWSKI: Are you providing the French milieu within your existing schools, or do you have a stand-alone school for that purpose?

MR. LAW: We provide that within the school.

MS BETKOWSKI: Within your existing school, the French, the Francophone . . .

MR. LAW: Yes. We have a wing that's l'école français.

MS BETKOWSKI: Okay. Interestingly, if I may be allowed a comment, I'm sure one of the issues that has to be dealt with is the difference between the separate school rights in the Constitution, which say - correct me if I'm wrong - once established, all individuals of that faith belong to that district.

MR. LAW: Correct.

MS BETKOWSKI: As opposed to French language rights, which are that if you choose to access them, you can. In other words, a Francophone doesn't have to. So that juxtaposition is a very different position for those two rights.

MR. LAW: I can see complications where the Francophone may not be of the Roman Catholic faith. That's where I could see some headaches.

MS BETKOWSKI: Another one? You mean another layer of them.

MR. LAW: Yeah. Well, I think again we have to be realistic though.

MS BETKOWSKI: Well, that's helpful.
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Well, if there's nothing further, thank you very, very much, Mr. Law. We appreciate your contribution.

MR. LAW: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
I enjoyed seeing you again. Thank you very much.

MS BETKOWSKI: It was nice to see you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Our next presenter would be Bob Dodds. Would you like to bring your . . .

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You left your name, Bob.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: For the purposes of the viewers.
Welcome to our committee, Bob.

7:20

MR. DODDS: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I'm going to speak pretty well off the cuff and from the heart. Being a proud Canadian first is one of my biggest sights I see for Canadians, and I say that because with the Canadian Armed Forces, when we were shipped overseas, we realized what a Canadian was. Up until that time, no, we were an Albertan. Now, it's a big difference. People outside of Canada just admire us to no end. They would give their left arm to become a Canadian - anything. They can't believe how open a country we've got. One way we can possibly get this to our people . . . We're too old; it won't do us any good to be able to get re-educated. But our young people, give them the opportunity to learn what a Canadian is.

I've got a few ideas to help us. One thing our young Canadians did overseas when they went to ECS - well, they started school over there at 3 years old; they didn't wait till 5 - is that they learned French. Because we lived in France and Belgium, it was only right that the children learn. When we were in Germany, the children learned German, and there was no shame; everybody was proud. They could speak it fluently by the time they were in grade 1, and they'd interpret for us adults. So I think if we're going to be bilingual, we have to start at an early age. I remember as a young fellow it wasn't compulsory for us to have French until grade 7. Well, forget it. It was so engrained in me that I didn't want to be French, so I refused to learn to it.

Now, tying this in, when I was in the Royal Canadian Air Force, I had many fine French Canadians working with me and serving with me, and I was proud of those people. We got along well. They came from the small counties like we did, and we had a very good time. When we were shipped overseas as Canadians - not as Albertans, not as Quebecois; as Canadians - we all stuck together, and we helped each other out. I was very proud to be a Canadian.

I would ask also that our education be the same in Canada right across the country, not that grade 13 in Ontario is better than grade 12 in Alberta or vice versa. You know, as Canadians we interchange provinces all the time, and we've got to re-educate our children. They're usually a year behind, or it's very difficult to catch up. This is what I say being a Canadian is: make it equal across Canada. Also, I feel we should be teaching our young people Canadian history. Can you as MLAs go to your people and say who were some of the Canadians who won Nobel prizes 20 or 30 years ago? Can we? Can we go back to our young people and ask them who were some of our . . . We have famous doctors right from Lac La Biche. How often do we see that advertised? How can we be proud of our leaders, our people that have done greatness for Canada? Never advertised.

So I'd ask you people also to take the press, which is one of our biggest stumbling blocks for Canadianism, and get them turned around to say, "Here's our proud leaders: Lester B. Pearson; here's McCurdy and Baldwin that flew the *Silver Dart*." The first Canadians flew them way down there in New Brunswick. The Chalk River project, nuclear research; Canada was in the forefront. Do we tell our young people that? We tell them what's wrong with Canada. I'm not interested in what's wrong with Canada. I want to hear the good things about Canada, how well this country has done. You know where I

hear it from? When I was over in Germany, the German people kept telling me this: you Canadians are so great; some of your doctors, some of your medicine, some of your nurses have done miracles. And I'm standing there with my mouth hanging open; I don't know what to say to them. They know more about Canadian history than I do, and that's a shame. So I ask that we teach some Canadian history so our young people can be proud of our country.

I ask also that the provinces do what they're good at and the federal government do what they're good at. We have so much of this intermingling. It's what I call protect your ass, and we do so much at every level in Canada. "Well, I can't let the feds do this, so I better have another government minister go and check on them." The feds come back and say, "Well, I'd better have a government minister in each province." Why? Why do we do this? We do good at what we do. Why don't we keep it that way?

I think one of the biggest things or obstacles now – when our country is so far in debt, that hurts all the people that have forward-looking futures. It's got to. If your wife had you 25 percent of your salary in debt every year and going deeper every year, how could you be proud of your wife? Or how could you women be proud of your husband if he kept putting you in debt 25 percent every year? And no hope, because nobody will stop, take the bull by the horns, and say that enough is enough. We've got to stand our ground and be proud Canadians, and we still have that time to do it.

Look at Japan after the war: devastated. I mean, heck, when we were kids we used to play with those Chinese or Japanese toys, and they were last year's beer cans. That was a big joke. It was fun. Well, they're not last year's beer cans any longer. They make beer cans better than we can make them now, because they're proud people. When I was over in Germany, you didn't say that one part of the country was worse than any other province in Germany. They'd take you and put you up against the wall and say: "How can you be so silly? We have to re-educate you." Very, very proud people, and everybody was respected. The street-cleaner had an important job, and he was given that respect each morning, right up to the doctor. Nobody was better than anybody else. They were all respected for their positions, and everybody would shake hands in the morning, which was common over there. It didn't matter if it was a doctor or a street-cleaner; everybody was respected for their position. We have to educate our people too. When I worked with the Japanese out at Syncrude, it was the same way: the fatherland comes first. In other words, Canada comes first.

Another way of doing that, and we have to start with our young people, is have an exchange of students. I don't think it'll cost us that much. Here's my idea, and build what you like out of it. I'll go back to much like we did in the Canadian Armed Forces. When we were down in St-Jean's boot camp, they put all the French and the English Canadians together, and after six weeks we were let out. Well, hell, you didn't care if a guy came from Timbuktu; you were glad to go to his home and visit him. It was different from being in the barracks 24 hours a day. You were proud to go and visit somebody, other than that sergeant major having you trooping on the parade square. So we would go to some of the French Canadians', a little town. They'd have us over the weekend, we had a heck of a good time, and it didn't cost anything.

I just came from a bison association meeting up in Grande Prairie here two or three months ago, and we had some French Canadians there. They never came and said, "Hey, you English Canadians, you're way out in left field." We didn't tell them,

"Hey, you Quebecois, you're crazy also." We looked at it positively. Those people were very interesting and very nice, and they wanted to see a good Canada too. They know we're all in trouble, but they think there's hope.

7:30

You know what? Having those people mixed, I wished that as a youngster I had learned French. Until I was in the Canadian Armed Forces, uh uh. I wish I had learned some French when I was at Canadian comrades, and I wish I had learned French when I was overseas. I realize it today, because it's me that wants to. It's not the government saying, "You get down there and learn it in night school. Here's \$500 tuition. Here are your books. Get your ass down to school, and learn it or else." It doesn't work. But by having our young people go there and live with some French Canadians during the summer for a few weeks, go to like a military camp and then go to live with them for the weekends and such like that, I'd be highly encouraged to learn French, or even Cree or Chipewyan.

Why can't we be all equal? Why do we have to have some people or some countries or some parts of Canada that have status and other parts that have nothing? I'm thinking of Newfoundland. Nobody says it, but she's on the bottom of the totem pole, which isn't right. There are a lot of good Newfoundlanders up here who have done well. Why can't we have it so Canada is equal across? No pros, and no cons. You're not better than me; I'm not better than you. We'll be mighty proud Canadians.

Again, I guess just to re-emphasize what I've said, we start off with the young people, and we get the press on our side to show the good parts of Canada. There's been a lot of goodness in French Quebec. They've done some very wonderful things. We've done some wonderful things in Alberta. B.C. has done wonderful things. They're looking at the Pacific Rim. We've got to look at that for business.

I think if you ever have the opportunity, you must live outside. It's nice to be on holidays, but it's not the same as living. Then you can see how proud. Just to give you an idea, I'll give you some highlights. You may not get this very often. We got lost in Paris. We always go, my wife and another friend and I. We were down in the derelict part. We didn't know where we were. We couldn't find our way out. This was in the early '60s. It would still have been bombed out from the war. There was a fellow that came. He had a cape on and his hat. Jack and I said: "We'd better split, and if he comes before us, we have a chance. We'll get him between us and not the girls." He came out, and he said, "I understand you're Canadians." We said, "Yes." He spoke English. He said: "I was a freedom fighter in Czechoslovakia during the Second World War. Some of your people came over and helped us. I'm just trying to return the favour. I know you're lost. I'll have you out of here in about five minutes. Just follow me." Wouldn't take any money. He was just proud to help a Canadian.

We got lost in Barcelona. We drove around in circles, couldn't find our way out. Then eventually some of the Spanish people stopped the car, and I really got scared. I told the missus, "Lock the doors; I don't know what's going to happen." He started speaking broken English, and he said: "I'm not here to harm you. I know you're from Canada, because I see your Canadian plates. I'll show you out of here." We drove around for over an hour. Didn't know where we were. Couldn't find out. It was impossible. He drove us out and wouldn't take money or anything. He said, "I just wish I could be a Canadian." And all the countries. Holland: their people know more about

Canada during the war and after the war than you could believe, and it made me astounded. Their children could speak six languages. They learned this when they were young people in school and were very proud of the Canadians there. So it's wonderful to be a Canadian, and I wish more people would go outside of Canada and look back at Canada and see how good a country we are.

We still have time to improve our country and get it out of debt, but we must go strongly on that. Then our people will be proud, like when our dollar was worth over a dollar and everybody had jobs because we had no debt: \$15 billion, which was a drop in the bucket in those days. Everybody was working for the betterment of the country, and there was work for our young people. We don't have that, and the reason is because we can't afford to have our people work. It's cheaper to put them on welfare, and it's one of the worst things we can do. We have lots of opportunity. Give those people an opportunity to become part of the work force. It's through education. It's not education where we spend millions of bucks making these fancy programs, putting a whole bunch of administrators in, and having about 5 percent results; it's got to come from the young people and what they want. We've got to ask them lots of questions, like if these ideas will work for them. I'm sure it will if we can get some of our good leaders with them and demonstrate to them what is good about Canada and what can be much better.

There's a lot of future in Canada. I mean, we've got everything we need. We encourage our young people to develop the country. I remember my father said, "Get a government job; you're guaranteed a job for life, until you die." Well, as you know, it doesn't work anymore. Just to give you an idea, the foreign people come into Canada, and look how well they do. You can't blame them. Why can't we do this with our own Canadian young people? The old people forget. We're too far gone. We're settled in our ways, and it's hard to take an old dog and teach him new tricks. That goes for the wives too. It's hard to train them to do new tricks.

Okay. That is roughly it in a nutshell, people. I've thought about this, and I've looked at it for a long time. It's right from the gut; it's right from the heart. The biggest thing is to get our press turned around to show the good parts of Canada and the good parts of our people, because I figure that's a very, very big hurdle to jump. If we can do that, we're well on our way to being happy Canadians.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

Mr. Chivers.

MR. CHIVERS: Mr. Dodds, you obviously consider education to be a critical component in the development of a sense of nation. I'm wondering. You spoke of having education the same across Canada. Do I take from that that you would speak in support of a constitutional framework which would enable the establishment of national educational standards?

MR. DODDS: I as a Canadian would like to be able to go to B.C., Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, or Fort Chip and have my children receive the same education. As a Canadian, it shouldn't matter where. That's very important to me.

MR. CHIVERS: Right. So you would agree, then, that there should be some constitutional mechanism to ensure that could happen, that there could be national standards.

MR. DODDS: Well, I'm not so sure on all the legalities and technicalities. I like speaking from the cuff or from the heart. I want to go anywhere in Canada, and if I have my children in grade 10 or grade 12, they shouldn't have to repeat half a year or take different courses to be able to graduate. That's what I'm saying.

MR. CHIVERS: Well, thank you for your comments. Certainly a heartfelt statement of your commitment to the nation's unity.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Sheldon.

MR. CHUMIR: Bob, thank you for your very interesting and heartfelt presentation. We're now wrestling in this country with a couple of competing philosophies. One is that we should transfer a lot of the federal powers totally to the provinces. They should take over matters like social programs and medicare. Get the federal government out of those programs, and just have individual types of programs within the provinces. The competing philosophy is that we need to have some national standards, some national glue, just like you've suggested in respect of the education system. What would your views be with respect to the general issue of strong central institutions in government as opposed to transferring powers to the provincial arena?

MR. DODDS: Well, like I was saying at the beginning, the province should do what it's good at doing, and the federal government should do what it's good at doing. I think that can be done if it's within – in other words, don't spend ourselves into debt. Let's say one province says: "I've got Blue Cross and everything else. You poor farmers out there in the dustbin in Saskatchewan can't afford that. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha." We can't have that. That's going on, and I don't like it. I like us to be Canadians. Only what we can afford, not luxurious places. We've got beautiful hospitals and everything else, but we can't afford to get sick to go in the stupid things. I can't afford to go in sick to the hospital, because it costs me too much money.

7:40

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are you referring to loss of wages?

MR. DODDS: No. This is a beautiful hospital, and I've got no qualms on that. We've got a third and fourth floor for expansion and such like that. But it still costs us money somewhere for a lot of our little things. If I get a sore toe, I go to the doctor and get two or three days off work. No problem; the company will pay for it. I can probably get a couple of days in the hospital to make it look good, and it costs our country money. I don't care if it's federal, provincial, or municipal; it comes out of our pocket.

MS BETKOWSKI: I see what you mean.

MR. DODDS: A hospital is there when we're really sick. But right now if my toe is sore and it looks a little blue, I can get a week in hospital, and I can guarantee you that I can get it. If I'm a good politician, I'll get two weeks.

MR. CHUMIR: Bob, I'm not quite clear. Obviously, we have to keep things within affordable reason, but are you saying that we should have the same kinds of standards within affordable

reason across the country, or are you saying each province should just do its own thing?

MR. DODDS: We must make it so that all Canadians feel good about their country first. Therefore, if I'm sick down in Newfoundland, I should be able to get the same rights as I do in Alberta. That's the way I'd like to see it.

Come again on what you were asking on the first question?

MR. CHUMIR: Oh, I think you've pretty well answered that.

MR. DODDS: Okay. The federal government must look after the outside of Canada. Right now we're getting lambasted and kicked in the teeth and everything else. "Hey, what's wrong with the federal government? You guys are so weak." It's just like anything else. If you're so far in debt, your banker is going to come to you, and if you can't get up and stand up to him – at least if you broke even or you've got money in the bank, you can go to that banker face-to-face and say, "Here's why I need a loan and an investment." But if you're \$100,000 in the hole, can you go to your banker and say, "I want a loan to invest in something"? He would just laugh at you and roll over you. That's why I say our federal government must become very strong. Once it's in a position of strength, we as Canadians can do whatever we want. We can't do that now. The bankers, what I call the international money brokers, control what Canada can spend and what she can't outside of Canada. The federal government must be able to look after Canada outside, so we must have a strong government. I don't have any conceptions of how much it should have over the provinces and vice versa.

I'd still like to go back to the old BNA Act. You know, we got by with it for 100 years. Now everybody's made this new pie-in-the-sky Constitution that's causing strife amongst our own people, against you and I and our people down east and our Indian people. I've worked with a few of them out on the west coast in the boat yards, and you couldn't ask for better boat-builders.

Chief Lathlin in The Pas, very few people will give him – that man changed that Indian band around. Just to give you an example of very smart people, they built a pulp mill up there. The pulp mill said: "Indian band, you've got all the gravel in The Pas. We want it. We will pay you minimum." Chief Lathlin told them to go to hell. The pulp mill said, "You can't tell us big guys what to do," so they went looking for gravel. The next place was almost Flin Flon. That's 100 miles away. The old chief was smart. They came back cap in hand to pay him his price for gravel, and he said: "Now, you people won't buy gravel from me; you'll buy the finished product: cement." He put that pulp mill over a barrel. He sold them finished cement and made that reservation a very proud reservation.

He went one step smarter yet. The city of The Pas was raising the taxes so horrendously. They were small and couldn't afford everything, so they just kept raising taxes. The Chief owned all the land across the river. He said: "Okay, town. We've got to get together and make a deal." The town laughed at him and said, "You can't do that." He said, "Watch me." He made money from all the cement, and he put up a great big mall over there. He said: "All you white guys who want to set up stores, come on over here. My taxes are half price," and all the businessmen moved across the river. You don't think the town of The Pas changed its mind real quick? Very, very smart.

You didn't see the good Indians out to midnight, 1 o'clock in the morning. The good Indians were home with their families.

When I was younger, I played soccer, and I never saw those guys down in the bars. Very, very smart people, but they had good leaders.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Ms Calahasen.

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Actually, I got most of the information in Mr. Dodds' speech. I wanted to find out – when you said the province should do what it's good at and the federal government should do what it's good at, you made a couple of statements after that that the federal government has certain jurisdictions or certain powers that it should stay with and the provinces should do some of the things that they are already doing. Is that what you're saying?

MR. DODDS: Yes. Do what you do well. There must be a way. I remember when poor old Premier Lougheed and Prime Minister Trudeau – we all know what it is underneath – came to a confrontation on energy programs. Well, if we can't agree, we've got to have a mediator, a Canadian, come and say, "Okay, men, we've got to sit down and be reasonable. What's the saw-off point?" It's better that we win some than nobody win anything and cause strife amongst our Canadian people. There are a lot of hurt feelings over that. I'm sure if we got together and said – it's just like a marriage. You know, you've got to give to the wife a hell of a lot more than she does to you, but that's beside the point.

MS BETKOWSKI: Depends on your point of view.

MR. DODDS: Well, I think you ladies are smart – I really do – and getting better all the time.

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, I'm just letting the last comment sink in here.

Bob, you talked about Newfoundland, as an example, not having anything and that that's not right, it shouldn't be that way. We have a system of transfer payments in this country whereby the federal government exacts from certain provinces certain revenues and then spreads them out to other regions. Some Albertans have expressed concern to us that Alberta pays out more than it gets back. Some of those dollars are transferred at various times to, let's say, provinces like Newfoundland, depending on what the economics are. What is your feeling on that system of transfer payments as an Albertan? If it is in fact true that Alberta is paying out more than it's getting in, should it have some say there? What's your sense of that?

MR. DODDS: Okay. Look at what those payments are doing to Newfoundland. Is it putting the province ahead? Hell, no; it's still back in the 1950s. Giving them transfer payments hasn't made those people more happy or more encouraged or feeling more like Canadians. It's just that we've got a hell of a good welfare society. The only trouble is that we're going broke trying to keep it up. But if we do what we did with some of our heritage fund, put it into worthwhile projects so that the people – and I ask that government not get too heavily involved in these projects but cause private industry to get in there to kick their butts and make them produce. If there's an opportunity there, let's say hydro in Labrador, the heritage fund should invest in that. Make private enterprise produce it, because they know how to make producers out of it. Nobody gets slack assed or says: "Oh, I'm tired. I'm going for a week's holidays," and go on welfare or poge or UIC. I used to see lots of that. Private

industry says, "If you're not here, there's somebody else to take your job." But if we put seed money into it with the government supporting those projects – let's say hydro, of which Newfoundland and Labrador have lots – and there's a good return from Newfoundland and they can see the light at the end of the tunnel and we can pay off the heritage fund debt in 10, 20 years, hey, I'm going to be a proud Canadian let alone a proud Albertan, because I've helped my brothers out. But to give them money and say, "Well, the fishing's dead, the forestry's dead, this is all dead, and it's cheaper to put you people on welfare," that's wrong, totally wrong. Welfare's totally wrong. That demoralizes people.

I was with the poor people in Winnipeg, where the Salvation Army did a very good job. I was a scoutmaster down there. Those little people were third-generation Canadians on welfare, and they would have given their eyeteeth to get off it, because they'd seen their parents go to alcohol with no way for them. They would come to that scout troop because we believed in freedom. We didn't treat them as welfare recipients. We had a heck of a big scout troop, a massive scout troop with the Salvation Army, and we treated those people just like they came from the rest of Winnipeg. We'd go on outings, give them exposure, go through all the different big businesses in town to show them the better parts of Canada, Winnipeg in that case. Those young people were proud. Some of them did very well and graduated from school because they saw an opportunity. I'm saying the same with Newfoundland or Nova Scotia. Help them to develop through private enterprise. I'd be proud to invest our heritage fund or even our money. It's going to do something to help those people out. Just like the Marshall plan with Germany after the war. We can do it.

7:50

MR. DAY: Thanks, Bob.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

MR. DODDS: Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Our next presenter is Dave McNab. While he's coming forward, is there anybody else in the audience who wishes to make a presentation? Some indication now will help us with gauging our time. I don't see any indication.

Welcome, Dave.

MR. McNAB: Thank you, sir. Mr. Chairman, the gentleman with me is Bill Almdal. He's the president of the Fort McMurray Progressive Conservative Constituency Association. That's the group we represent tonight and the group on whose behalf we wish to make a presentation. Our purpose here tonight is to present and perhaps restate a submission that our group made earlier to a slightly more partisan audience, being the Progressive Conservative annual general meeting in Edmonton. Nonetheless, it was a resolution that was passed virtually unanimously. It's perhaps somewhat different in context or substance than the two previous submissions you heard.

We're concerned, particularly after Meech Lake, that any feeling, right or wrong, that had Meech Lake been ratified, Alberta's position in the country, and perhaps other provinces as well, may have been somewhat compromised in terms of its ability to effectively deal with the federal government. We feel that they were on par when dealing with the federal government relative to other provinces. Obviously, nobody knows at this

point what path is going to be followed in terms of constitutional reform, much less where the country is going to end up. It's difficult, perhaps impossible to say right now with any degree of certainty whether there's going to be a wholesale change in the distribution of powers between the federal and provincial governments, but arising out of those concerns is again a feeling, at least in our association, that we do not want to see Alberta either drawn into or backed into a position where somehow they end up being a weak sister in terms of negotiating with the government.

It's obvious to us, for whatever reason and whatever gloss you want to put on it, that Quebec primarily seeks a restructuring of the country. I wouldn't want anyone to interpret our presentation as being anti-Quebec or anti-French or anti anything, least of all antimulticultural. I think Fort McMurray, perhaps more than any other city in the province, is as multicultural as you'll find, and that's largely due to the professionals drawn here by virtue of the plants, people that come from all over the world. As I say, I don't want anyone to interpret this as being an anti-French or anti-Quebec suggestion or submission.

We believe that whatever course negotiations take amongst the provinces, and if necessary directly between Alberta and the federal government, this province ought to adopt a position that above and beyond anything else there is no province and no territory in the country that has any special status or any special powers or any special rights. There might arguably be a reason, perhaps some good reasons, why there are certain people or groups of people in the country that ought to be accorded some type of different status if that's what they're seeking, and when I say that, I'm thinking of aboriginal groups. But in terms of any kind of negotiating position that the provincial government adopts as part and parcel of constitutional reform, we think the cornerstone of that position has to be, at a minimum, that the only thing they would support is equality amongst the provinces and territories in their relationship with the federal government. That particular position has to be understood as being Alberta's position through any type of constitutional negotiations so no province or territory has any special status or any favoured status when dealing with the federal government.

That's the extent of the submission I'd like to make on behalf of our association.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Day.

MR. DAY: Thanks, Dave and Bill.

Dave, you said we can't tell at this point if there'll be a wholesale difference in the division of powers, provincial and federal. That's true. We can't tell now. But what we are interested in is what you think, because your thoughts can make the difference in terms of what kinds of powers are going to be where. We are trying to represent the position of Albertans that we hear from around the province. What's your view?

MR. McNAB: I don't know particularly whether – I understand what you're saying when you ask for my view. I mean, Bill and I are here making a presentation on behalf of our association. If you're asking for my particular view, my own personal view, I think that whatever the outcome of any kind of distribution of powers, it's got to be based on the idea that it's going to at least be as effective and perhaps more effective and more efficient in terms of running the country and making people feel that they have a part in the country and that they have a say in terms of what goes on. Whether that means a large change or a small

change or no change at all in terms of areas of jurisdiction I suppose you'll glean from all of the hearings.

Perhaps I'm a little reluctant to get into what my own personal opinion is, because we're here on behalf of the association.

MR. DAY: Sure, and I appreciate that.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Did you wish to supplement that, Bill?

MR. ALMDAL: Yeah. I was just going to say, when Dave ended up there, that, yes, we are here on behalf of the association. But if we have the opportunity and you don't mind, certainly we can speak about some things that we have talked about but have not cleared with the association. I could add a few comments of my own.

MR. DAY: Bill, just to help with that, a number of people who've presented on behalf of an association or a group, when they've been asked a certain question, have said: "I don't know what my association or group would say, but . . ." and then they clearly differentiate, ". . . my own personal feeling would be this." So you can feel free to do that, should you so desire.

MR. ALMDAL: Well, thank you. I'm an advocate of decentralization and that you put the power where the money is being spent and where the good is being done. If there are things that involve Alberta, they should have the power to carry those things out; in other words, they have the power and the money. So if we're talking about our education, our hospitals, our health care, or whatever, let's put the power to do that right in Alberta. It should be closer to user pay. We will provide the service for Albertans that we can afford. Certainly there has to be a baseline across Canada so we don't have somebody out there that really can't afford the minimal care. There needs to be a federal guideline. This is the minimum that would be supplied to all Canadians, but over and above that, I think the governments of all provinces should have the capability, the power, and the resources to carry out the programs that the people in that province want and desire.

MR. DAY: Okay. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: John.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand your point about the essential equality of the provinces, and I believe that's been the position of the Alberta government going back a fair little ways. It seems to me that I recall a resolution passed in the Legislative Assembly prior to the 1980 round of constitutional talks, where the Assembly more or less directed the government to stick to that position: don't agree to anything that gives to another province some power and authority that Alberta doesn't get. There's an argument that's made about Quebec – and I think we should sort of put that on the table – that Quebec has certain needs or they perceive that they have a need for greater authority dealing with language and culture, particularly. Some people feel that that might be okay so long as they give up their authority to have any say over those items in the rest of the country. If they're going to take the authority in Quebec, they have no right then to make decisions about how the federal power might be exercised in the rest of the country. Now, you get into some dicey problems here. What I'd like to

ask basically is if push comes to shove and the choice is that Quebec either gets some additional authority unique to Quebec or else we say goodbye to them and the end of our country as we know it, where do we sit then? Do we hold to our guns and say, "No, nothing for Quebec that everybody else doesn't get," or do you see any room for flexibility there at all?

8:00

MR. McNAB: Again this is just my personal opinion, but whatever difficulties are plaguing Canada and whatever problems people have in terms of getting their hands on some type of Canadian identity or feeling comfortable with where the country is going, I don't think any of that is going to change if there's a sense that somehow the federal government has treated Quebec more favourably than any other part of the country, and there are going to be as many voices as there are arguments in favour of Quebec exercising its own control over language or its own culture. I think we're probably too far down the road to ever try and undo it. I'm not even suggesting that it ought to be undone, but I think if there's the slightest suggestion that any province, and in this case Alberta, has somehow compromised its own position to keep Quebec in the country and in doing so has ignored people's feelings that Quebec somehow now has more favoured status, that is just going to make the existing problems that much more difficult to resolve. It's not going to resolve anything.

MR. McINNIS: Fair enough. I just want to make it clear that I'm not necessarily talking about giving more to Quebec, just a different type of arrangement in terms of how jurisdiction is exercised. I know this is a complicated area and different phrases come along from time to time. We used to talk about special status, a term that has been used. Distinct society was used in the Meech Lake accord. Some people talk about asymmetrical federalism, which means not that there's quantifiably more benefit but just that there's a different exercise of the jurisdiction in respect of one province which is different than the others. But what I hear you saying is that there should be no such thing, that we should stick to the proposition that every province has exactly the same powers and we shouldn't vary it as a proposed solution to the province of Quebec.

MR. McNAB: I guess what I'm saying is that, for example, Bill has mentioned that Alberta might want to have more control over its own health care and education, and I guess that maybe runs somewhat counter to the idea that the transfer payments are for the benefit of the country as a whole. But what we're pitching to this committee at this point is that there oughtn't to be constitutional reform that results in one province somehow being able to have a closer arrangement with the federal government than any other province. If as a result of this Quebec somehow ended up with particular powers or powers that are peculiar to itself relating to such things as language or culture or what have you, so long as that doesn't mean that they have a more favoured position when dealing with Ottawa than any other province in the country, I don't know that anyone would be particularly concerned if Quebec had more autonomy when dealing with issues about language and culture. What we're concerned about is not having a situation where Quebec somehow has greater, I suppose, leverage or greater power to deal with the federal government than another province. We're just talking about the provinces dealing with the federal government.

MR. McINNIS: Just so I'm quite clear, it would be okay if they had additional authority to make laws within their own boundaries dealing with language and culture, but it's not having more clout with the federal government. That's where you would draw the line.

MR. McNAB: That's right. I think in terms of being equal, if Quebec is given power to make laws that are peculiar to Quebec in a certain area, so long as any other province can do that, then you're going to get the sense that all the provinces still remain equal. If you don't have that, then you end up with a situation where rightly or wrongly the vast majority of people in the country feel that Quebec somehow has some special status, and it's going to do nothing other than alienate them and cause greater division than already exists.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Dennis.

MR. ANDERSON: Yes, Mr. Chairman. My questions follow very directly from those of John McInnis. You mentioned Meech Lake. Would it be fair to say that your presentation tonight was motivated by perceptions of the distinct society clause in the Meech Lake accord?

MR. McNAB: When the resolution was first considered by our association in the context of, again, a Progressive Conservative annual general meeting, I guess it was considered in a situation where our association did not want the provincial government to somehow either be drawn into or backed into a position where they would give away something simply for the sake of keeping Quebec in Canada if, in doing so, the result was going to be a different problem but as problematic as the situation we have now. When we took that to the annual general meeting, it was put to the assembly on that basis, that each province has to be equal at the end of the day when the constitutional reform has been accomplished. However long that takes, each province has to be equal in terms of its ability to deal with the federal government.

MR. ANDERSON: Okay. Mr. McInnis raised the philosophy of asymmetrical federalism. We always seem to get a fifty-dollar term each time we have a new round of constitutional discussions.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Triple E last time.

MR. ANDERSON: Triple E last time. You can blame me for that in part.

It is true that today provinces have different authorities because of the different needs that have been expressed through our development as a federation. You don't have a problem with that as long as it isn't a fundamental difference in the weight one holds in Confederation. Is that essentially it in trying to . . .

MR. McNAB: That's right.

MR. ANDERSON: So in trying to resolve the problems now that the nation has, the different needs there of Quebec, Alberta, Newfoundland, would you have any problem with a concept where the Constitution gave the provinces powers but the provinces could individually ask the federal government to exercise those depending on the needs there might be there? In other words, in the Atlantic provinces or parts of them they may

find their population and their economics such that they would want the federal government to exercise a particular power, whereas here we may not want that to happen. Or they may want to exercise one in fisheries and we probably wouldn't have a lot of demand for that power here.

MR. McNAB: To be fair about it, I obviously haven't given it enough thought in terms of that level of detail, and the mechanics of it is something that would probably take as long to work out as the theory. But our feeling is that there's a real perception – and perception somehow ends up being regarded, I suppose, as reality – that Quebec is going to get a leg up on every other province or territory in this country. That is probably what causes more anxiety and difficulty than anything to do with "You can only have a French sign on the outside of your store," all these kinds of details. So long as the end result is that everyone perceives that each province has equal weight, as you say, in terms of their participation in Confederation and their ability to deal with the federal government – and again this is just my personal opinion – I think that would go a long way toward making people feel more comfortable with the kind of country Canada is and how it operates. So long as there is the slightest impression that it is other than that, if nothing else it affords politicians of any stripe the opportunity to use that to in some sense cause problems and make arguments to people that perhaps don't have any foundation, but arguments nonetheless. It just seems to foment a lot of strife in the country. If the perception is that all the provinces are equal in their ability to deal with the federal government, then however they deal with the federal government is between the federal government and that province.

&:10

MR. ANDERSON: Okay. Fair enough. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Sheldon.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, counsellor. I think one of the problems or perceptions leading to our current difficulties is that many people, perhaps the majority of Quebecers, consider themselves to be Quebecers first and perhaps Canadians down the line. I'd be very interested in getting your own perspective on what you see in Alberta from people you come in contact with in this community, as to whether or not people in this area – first generally, and then perhaps you might give a personal opinion – consider themselves Canadians first and Albertans second or vice versa, Albertans first.

MR. McNAB: When you say in this area, do you mean Fort McMurray?

MR. CHUMIR: Generally, yes. People you come in contact with. Just your perception of how people think, and then I'd like to hear what your own personal feelings would be.

MR. McNAB: I wouldn't have any opinion generally. I think that again because there are so many people in Fort McMurray – I mean, first of all, probably there are very few Albertans in Fort McMurray and even fewer people that were born here. The majority of people in this region have come from another province, and perhaps great numbers of them have also come from other countries. Again, my own personal opinion is if there's that perception in Quebec, it may be something that is voiced only when they are in Canada, and nobody knows if

Quebeckers traveling in the states first claim to be Canadians and then claim to be Quebeckers. In their own country they're probably, as you say, more inclined to lay claim to being Quebeckers before Canadians, and that may be something the whole country has contributed to.

But in this region anyway, my own observation is that there isn't that kind of dual identity, because most of the people have come from other areas of the country and there doesn't tend to be the same emphasis on being from Alberta or being from British Columbia or Ontario or even those who venture to say they're from Saskatchewan, being from Saskatchewan. Being at Syncrude, Bill would have far more contact with people from other areas of the country and other areas of the world, and maybe he has a different opinion in terms of the way people view that.

MR. CHUMIR: Do you, Bill?

MR. ALMDAL: I feel they are Canadians here. I lived and worked in Quebec for some eight, nine years. I left Quebec because I thought it was a separatist province. When I got to Alberta I had a surprise; I felt I might be in another separatist province. But that was many years ago.

But no, I feel people are Canadians here. There's a mixed bag from all over the place. There's a good Francophone population here, a good group of people from Newfoundland. They mix, and they're Canadians and Albertans. I think if you want to talk about people being Canadian, go down to Florida and find the good Canadian contingent of retirees down there. Sure, they're from Quebec and all over the place, but they're Canadians down there and talked about as Canadians. So my general impression in this area is certainly that they are Canadians first.

MR. CHUMIR: What about your sense of self as being Canadian? Would you describe yourselves as Canadians first or ...

MR. ALMDAL: Yes, very much so.

MR. CHUMIR: Okay. Canadians first, then. If we're to be Canadians, how do we identify as Canadians? Is there a value in keeping some strong national institutions, some things that are reflective of what it means to be Canadian, perhaps in terms of programming symbols, or can we move in a direction where every province just goes on its own and establishes its own identity? Do you think we need those national values and symbols, and if so, what? What is it going to mean to be a Canadian?

MR. ALMDAL: Well, there are symbols. Wherever I've travelled the Canadian flag has carried a lot of weight. In places where they hear you speak English they first of all assume you're American, and the minute they spot your Canadian flag, it's a lot different. They're proud to help you and serve you, whatever, and I think we had the previous speaker talking about that. I've experienced that all through Europe and Australia and the U.S., no matter where I go. If you want a symbol, there's nothing more profound than our Canadian flag and to wear that on our luggage and clothing and such. There are other symbols, but I can't think of one that means more out there to people than our flag.

MR. McNAB: And the health care system. When you travel someplace – again, my own experience is that if there's one thing in particular, say, amongst Americans that is just baffling to them it is the idea of a national health care system. They don't understand how it works. It seems to be something they would dearly love to have. Now, I guess Canadians tend to look at it and say this is too expensive to administer, the same as any other kind of social safety net. You know, Americans seem to think the whole country is full of nothing but social safety nets, be it welfare or UIC or the health care system. Some of those are probably worth maintaining, but it may be that by the same token the time has come to restructure them and sort of make them a little more in keeping with the needs of different regions of the country.

MR. CHUMIR: Well, I understood Bill to say that in terms of medical programs he favoured baseline federal guidelines. Would this be one of the things, some minimum you would consider to be a criteria in the hallmark of being a Canadian, that from one end of the country you know you have a certain standard?

MR. ALMDAL: Yes, let's set basic standards. I think the federal government can set basic standards – they don't have to administer them – and allow the provinces to run the programs as they see fit. Each province again would have equal opportunity to enhance that program. The federal government should set a basic minimum standard of health care, of education, and many other things.

MR. CHUMIR: Okay. Currently, the situation we have in terms of medicare is that there are some general standards in terms of portability, comprehensiveness, universality. I think you have questioned universality, the issue of user pay. But we have those, and in fact almost everything else is done by the provincial government. We make all the decisions. Our system is totally unique. I'm wondering: if I read you correctly, your concern then would not be the fact that there are federal guidelines as much as perhaps disagreeing with the federal guideline that doesn't involve, for example, user pay. Would that be a fair assessment, that it's not the fact of having guidelines, it's the specific guideline that you disagree with?

MR. ALMDAL: What I was getting at when I said user pay: I think you can't have that totally, but you want to get as close to that as you can. User in this case might be the province, and if the province feels they would like to enhance a certain program, then it's up to the elected body to enhance that program. That's not necessarily the individual per se, like you or me. In some cases it is, but in our government I don't think so. The people want to have the programs we do have now. We are moving toward more of a user pay, but that's getting away from the national issue and on the provincial issue.

Did I answer your question, Sheldon?

MR. CHUMIR: You do favour, then, some federal guidelines. What about social programs? Again, not making any assumption as to what the minimum is, do you feel that to be a Canadian there should be a minimum standard of some kind with respect to one end of the country to the other?

MR. ALMDAL: Yes.

MR. CHUMIR: Okay. Now, I just want to clarify in terms of that issue of provinces being equal. The distinct society provision in Meech Lake was one which – I think there's some general concurrence that this created special status for Quebec in respect of its impact on the Charter of Rights. Is that a fair assessment? That's your perception?

8:20

MR. McNAB: That's correct.

MR. CHUMIR: Then your association would have been opposed to Meech Lake on that fundamental basis.

MR. McNAB: To be honest with you, I can't recall that we even discussed it in that kind of detail. I think that at any point in time when you have, for example, the Charter of Rights and the Constitution as it was redrawn in '82 laid over everything in the country and then have the opportunity for any province to come along and say "We don't want to be part of this anymore" or have an opportunity presented by virtue of the federal government and a province or territory agreeing that a province or territory doesn't have to be part of this anymore, that just completely cuts away at the foundation of the whole document in the first place. I mean, that is just bound to create a lot of problems. If the country is going to be a country as a whole and they're going to stick together and pull together, then there should not be the opportunity for one part of the country to say, "We're pulling out when the going is rough."

Again, this is just my personal opinion, but in terms of my own observation as far as – for example, you've been using the war in the Middle East. For all the different points of view expressed in the United States, when they made their decision to invade, once the decision was made, all the dissenters said: "We had our opportunity to say our peace. It's a democracy, majority rules, and now we're going to pull behind our country and our government and support them." That doesn't happen in Canada. Obviously, people have to have an opportunity to say their peace, to express their point of view, but even after the decision is made, the people who don't like the way the decision went continue to dissent and continue to, I guess loosely speaking, cause some problems. We never seem to get to the point here where once a decision is made, people recognize it's a democratic country and, the decision having been made, everyone should be prepared to support the decision because it's made by your federal government. If you don't like it, then you get rid of the federal government at the next election. There seems to be a real difficulty in this country with people continually harping and whining and complaining. Consequently, the federal government is just running from pillar to post trying to piece off every special interest group to try and keep everyone happy. I mean, you can't do it. They don't seem to have that problem in the States. That's why I don't think having a Constitution that allows people to drop out when they don't like the way it's going serves any purpose at all. It creates more dissension and more opportunity for fighting than anything else.

MR. CHUMIR: Could I just skip back for a moment to this distinct society clause. Would you be supportive of a distinct society clause in a new constitutional proposal in the same form as that clause present in the Meech Lake accord?

MR. McNAB: Not if it means that Quebec is somehow going to either have or be seen to have cut a special deal with the

federal government that gives them some special powers that no other province has.

MR. CHUMIR: And did you see that as part of the Meech Lake accord?

MR. McNAB: I think that was not maybe a widely accepted view of it but enough to cause the thing not to be ratified.

MR. ALMDAL: There was certainly a perception that there was a status. Even the lawyers that wrote that letter on the bottom line put the disclaimer, and of course the media picked up on that disclaimer and said: see, there could be special powers for Quebec. The fact that Quebecers speak French and they have napoleonic law versus the English law: well, it can be stressed or stated in the Constitution that they have rulings over that. It doesn't have to be a special status.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: A last question, or is there any . . .

MR. CHUMIR: This would be my last question; that's correct. Is there anybody else waiting to get on?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes, there is.

MR. CHUMIR: Oh, there is. Sorry about that. Well, this has been a particularly interesting one.

There's been a proposal that the provincial government should take over a greater tax jurisdiction with respect to personal taxation. I think the western finance ministers were talking about that very positively at Lloydminster not so long ago. It seems to me that that would involve either, on the one hand, having a system such as Quebec has where we in Alberta, you and I and everybody else, would be filing not just one personal income tax return but two personal tax returns or, alternatively, the federal government would agree to totally get out of personal taxation, which encompasses such a huge portion of its revenues that there'd be no negligible amounts left. I'm going to make the assumption that we're talking about two income tax returns. Would you favour that in order for the province to obtain more fiscal room? Should we be proposing that?

MR. ALMDAL: Well, I hope you realize you're asking us right off the cuff here, but taxes is one of my favourite subjects. No, we don't need two tax systems. We have one and let's keep one. We're totally against any increase in bureaucracy. Sure, the people in Quebec are duplicating the roles of the people in the federal government, and that's a waste of all our money. No, I think we should have greater control over the money we have to spend in the province of Alberta, but let's not duplicate bureaucracy.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Barrie.

MR. CHIVERS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you gentlemen for coming tonight. This has been a really interesting dimension on the hearings, as the first presentation of an overtly partisan position. It really helps to put . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We had the Riverside Exchange.

MR. CHIVERS: Oh, that's true. Sorry. The second.

In any event, it's been a very useful discussion. I want to take us back to your comments about an equity position and no special status for Quebec. My question has to do with language rights, the Official Languages Act and bilingualism. I'm just wondering what that means to you in terms of the application of that principle in the area of language.

MR. McNAB: Again, my opinion is that – I mean, I'm very much in favour of multiculturalism, I suppose multilingualistic rights. It seems, as with so many things, that the perception is that a lot of this is being forced on people. If it wasn't being forced on them, people might be more willing to embrace it. If anything can be done to get away from the idea that these are requirements, I think it would make them more acceptable. The fact that Quebec may want and need and perhaps even deserve more autonomy to deal with items such as their culture and their language is just a product of the fact that when the country was put together, people viewed it as being comprised largely of English and French people. We're not going to change that. It's something that is going to be with us forever, but there have to be certain adaptations made.

Whether Quebec has certain rights in that or not, I don't think anyone is going to complain about that. In fact, I think deep down inside people would recognize that that might be appropriate as long as to give them those rights doesn't mean somehow they have a greater say in the operation of the country or a more favoured status when dealing with Ottawa. Whether it's Quebec and their language or Alberta and their energy or the east coast provinces and their natural resources, each area of the country, each province of the country has things that are close to their heart. To make everyone feel as if they are having their say in the operation of the country, I think that those people, those different regions, have to be allowed to supervise the things that are closest to them. If you start taking language and culture away from Quebec or you take resources away from Alberta, then you start to feel you're just a lesser partner in Confederation and nobody perhaps even respects your presence anymore.

8:30

MR. CHIVERS: Okay. Just to bring it into a concrete situation, then, on a federal level – I'm speaking federally here rather than within the provincial domains and provincial jurisdictions – I take it from that that you wouldn't disagree with the requirement to provide federal services in both languages.

MR. McNAB: All across the country?

MR. CHIVERS: Yes.

MR. McNAB: Well, I don't think it's necessary all across the country.

MR. CHIVERS: Where numbers warrant.

MR. McNAB: Where numbers warrant I think it should be done, but to do it on a wholesale basis, I mean, that's ridiculous. It's not necessary, and it's too expensive.

MR. CHIVERS: So if it was done on a basis similar to the minority language education rights that are protected in section 23 of the Charter, and that is with the proviso that where

numbers warrant, you have the right to minority language instruction, you wouldn't have a problem?

MR. McNAB: I wouldn't have a problem with that. I don't know that really anyone would.

MR. CHIVERS: I guess this ties back to the discussion you were having with Mr. Chumir with respect to Bill 101 and the notwithstanding clause. I take it a large part of your problem has to do with the ability of the provinces to opt out of some of the constitutional guarantees, the Charter guarantees.

MR. McNAB: My personal opinion is, to be honest with you, I don't know that it gives me that much concern or, at least, that I've thought about it enough to cause it to give me some concern. Certainly, you know, a lot of other people have. I think if that creates the perception that people can just walk away from a deal once it's made because they don't like the way the deal is going, it's just an opportunity to create further division in the country. I don't think you can truly call it a national or a Canadian Constitution that really provides the framework for running the country if any group of people at any point in time can say, "We don't want to be governed by it anymore." I mean, it just becomes meaningless.

MR. CHIVERS: Yeah, I understand where you're coming from.

Finally, you made a comment, and it seemed to be a bit of an afterthought, but I was wondering if you could expand on it for us. Although you maintain no special status for Quebec, you did make the comment that perhaps aboriginals might be entitled to a different status. I'm sure wondering what you had in mind.

MR. McNAB: I didn't have anything particular in mind. I think what I was thinking when I said that was that, again from our point of view, the harder this is, the equality amongst the provinces or territories vis-à-vis each other and the way they deal with the federal government . . . There are going to be groups of people, be they French people or aboriginal people or whoever, that are going to say, "We are substantially different from the majority of the people in this country," for whatever reason, be it language, culture, race, whatever. "We need the ability to relate differently to the country, to have more control over the things that are closest to us." It doesn't mean that they have more rights in the country or that they have any less rights. It just means that they have a little more autonomy in terms of the way they govern their own group within the country.

MR. CHIVERS: To put it another way, some concrete differences, for example, might justify a differential treatment in certain areas.

MR. McNAB: Differential treatment but not preferential treatment.

MR. CHIVERS: Right.
Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for your presentation, gentlemen.

MR. McNAB: Thank you, sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Members of the committee, we have two more presenters, so maybe we should pay a little more attention to the clock as we're proceeding now. I hope the

presenters won't think that we're trying to cut them off. We'll try to be as expansive as possible.

I'd ask Arthur Avery to come forward, please. Welcome to our proceedings, Arthur.

MR. AVERY: Thank you very much. First of all, I apologize for not having a written submission. I just got back in from Fort Chipewyan, doing a little bit of volunteer work with the Cree Indian band.

My reason for coming tonight to speak to you is that, I guess you'd have to say, I am a Canadian. I want to see Canada stay together, but not at the expense of Alberta, not at the expense of Saskatchewan or British Columbia, not for the benefit of Quebec. I do not see any need for special status.

My background. The Averys were chased into Canada in 1783 as United Empire Loyalists. I'm a second-generation Albertan born and raised in a community that was predominantly Ukrainian speaking. I am a firm believer in multilingualism, and I believe that should be promoted. I do not have a lot of good feelings about the enforced bilingualism, and I'm speaking as a person that has taken five years of French including university and gone through a lot of years in the work force and never had occasion to use it. I see, as I said, reasons for having multilingualism, not bilingualism. I think that in our collage of different racial origins we have in Canada and Alberta, and especially in Fort McMurray, we have to have a tolerance for all languages. So that is something we have to look at in a more definite way.

Getting back to the true Canada, we are all equal. I don't think you can say that anybody has really special status. If you look into your backgrounds, you all have something that is very distinct, and to say that one area is distinct from another, I have very, very great concerns. I can't swallow it; I'm sorry. If there was to be any special attention given, I would say it would have to be to the aboriginals rather than to the French speaking. Our situation with the aboriginal people has gone on much too long and must be settled. I see special consideration, but I do not see special status.

That's basically my reason for being here.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Avery.

I'll just give a moment for the members to consider whether they have questions.

Stockwell.

8:40

MR. DAY: Thanks. Mr. Avery, my ancestors got chased up here about the same time yours did, but then somewhere along the line a great-grandmother married an American from Boston and stayed down there to fight, so there's a mixture of the two. It's not my fighting mood that's coming out right now.

I'm wondering. When you talk about special consideration going to the aboriginal people, I'd just like to ask you: some aboriginal groups are asking for the ability for self-government, and at the same time there has yet to be a clear definition of what that entails, everything that involves. In your eyes should self-government be defined before it's moved in that direction, or should there be a trust on the part of, let's say, the federal government, since that's where a lot of it would reign, in terms of saying, "Go ahead with self-government." Should there be a definition of what that means?

MR. AVERY: I think there should be a definition. I think there should be a designation of areas which will come into

effect first and foremost. One of the things I see some interesting results with is in the area of the courts. That is coming into effect now where the elders of certain communities up in this general area are having some say in the sentencing of native youths. It seems to be having some success. These people are then being judged by their peers as it were, and as such the sentence is fitting of their way of life. I think in that one aspect especially self-government is a benefit.

To what extent that should be allowed to expand is an extremely good question, because at some stage some other group is going to say: "Well, there's a precedent. Let's scream, and we'll get it too." All at once you have the first step towards anarchy.

MR. DAY: Yeah, those are some of the things that Albertans are struggling with, so I appreciate your input on that.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Sheldon.

MR. CHUMIR: I might as well take the opportunity to ask Mr. Avery about his views vis-à-vis centralization versus decentralization. You've heard a lot of the discussion, so I need not get into the detail with respect to the issues.

MR. AVERY: Well, I think there are certain aspects of the operation of a given area that are best managed from a provincial level. However, I am still a believer in the monarchy. I'm still a believer in a strong central government. I think that those have to be the aspects. For example, health care I think is one that has to be universal, but there has to be a tempering of it in the areas that are more prosperous, maybe in a situation that they can be more free with their health care or they can have their fees at a lower rate. That's a possibility, but by and large I am in favour of a strong central government.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Avery.

MR. AVERY: Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The committee would now invite Gord Benoit to come to the table. Good evening. Welcome.

MR. BENOIT: I didn't come prepared tonight though I would like to express my concern for this country.

I'm of native background from Fort Chip. I'm a Canadian. I'm a Cree Indian. The Cree Indians are from northern Quebec, northern Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta. We, the native peoples, signed various treaties with the English Crown. We never signed treaties with the federal government or the dominion government of Canada, and a lot of those treaties lay about on the wayside.

A lot of people look down and say: "You don't pay tax. I pay tax. I don't live on a reserve or work on a reserve. I pay tax." They say: "You get free housing. I don't get free housing. I pay for my house as well." Then I hear Quebec saying, "If we don't have our way, we're going to leave." Well, that's fine. Perhaps they can leave.

As for the rest of Canada breaking up, I have one question and that is: if this country breaks up, does it revert to the native people? The treaties, as I've stated, were signed with the

Crown, with the dominion government representing the British Crown. Now all of a sudden the federal government, the provincial governments are saying, "We'll go our own way." If we go our own way, the Cree are still in northern Quebec, Ontario, right across this province. We'll still be Cree.

We talk about minorities. The white people in my eyes are white people. You're not Ukrainians; you're not Frenchmen; you're not Englishmen: you're white people.

We talk about the rights of speaking French or English. When I was five, I was placed in a residential school. I spoke Cree; now I speak English. I couldn't learn French because that's what the nuns and our brothers and priests spoke amongst themselves. I had to give up my native language. I couldn't speak that. That left me with English. Now I don't speak my own language. So to ask me to learn to speak French with a name like Benoit . . . They say, "Parlez-vous français?" I'll say no, because I don't. My grandparents did; I don't.

You say, "Well, Quebec says." I don't care what Quebec says. I have no great love for the east. By the east that's Alberta/Saskatchewan border. I'm an Albertan. I'm a northern Albertan. Somebody mentioned earlier on tonight that we Canadians should be appreciative of what we have in Canada. I was overseas a couple of times and I agree; we should be. We should stand together. We should be equal.

I don't agree with giving up what my people surrendered in the land. We made a trade. A trade was made. A contract was signed between, again I say, the Crown and the native people. There was no Prime Minister's signature on the treaty. There was no Prime Minister's stamp on the treaty. It is the stamp of the British Crown. If parts of Quebec were surrendered to the Crown, it's not the Crown of France. In this booklet here it's the British Crown that asked who should be the head of this country. As far as I'm concerned, it's either the Queen or back to the native people. Okay; being native I'm somewhat biased.

8:50

The native people have been looked down upon and misunderstood. If one of the policies of the white Anglo-Saxons is to civilize the savages, as the treaties in history indicate, then we must be turned into white men. Now, that's pretty hard. You come around in January, and we'll notice a difference. To be educated, yes. To be turned into white men, no. We each and every one of us have our own cultural bases. A lot of people will say, "I'm an Indian." Well, I have multiculturalism in my own self, because I'm not pure, but I choose to be recognized as a native though I have more white blood in me. I choose to be recognized as a Canadian. When I go overseas, I go as a Canadian. I don't go as an Albertan. I don't go as someone from Fort McMurray. I live in Canada. I'm proud to wear that little flag on my lapel. To give up this country to the demands of one group of people, whether it's aboriginals, French, Ukrainian, it doesn't matter, to give it up for one group, what do we have? Nothing.

You talk about centralized governments, decentralized governments. The problem is not centralized or decentralized governments. The problem is pettiness amongst people who want a little bit more than somebody else. In Alberta we pay a fair amount of tax to support other provinces that don't have as much. At the same time, we can look down and say, you know, "Look at them; we're so good." But are we so good? I can look down or look up and say, "Look at what the French did to us; look at the English, Scotsmen, Ukrainians." Hey, when it comes down to it, we're all Canadians. You choose to live in this country, you live by its laws. That's where it's at.

We agreed to have to surrender Canada in return for stuff. You guys agreed to give stuff. Also, we were given the option of taking it willingly or taking it at the end of a gun, by law. Whose law? It wasn't ours. That's the way you gave it. They said, "If you guys don't sign, we're going to enforce our laws anyway." So, you know, we signed. We accepted.

When the Constitution came to this country, I wasn't asked. Sure, there may have been some little ad in the paper, but I wasn't asked to come forward. I may not have been old enough. Today I have that opportunity. The country is able, no matter what form of government or who is in power, to rule this land as a unified nation. If we're not a unified nation, then I think we'd better start looking at some other options and trading blocs if we have to give in to one small group. Whether they comprise 25 percent of the population or not, we are one. I speak English not by choice. If I was in Quebec, I'd be speaking French not by choice. So who gives them in Quebec special privileges?

In our history books it says the English and the French had a little battle. There were natives on both sides. Some won; some lost. Last summer we had a little battle with natives on one side, the French on the other, and a lot of bystanders. What for? A little piece of land that by divine right King Louis of France said, "It's mine, and I give it to whomever I choose." Well, today are we going to do that with Quebec? Are we going to say "by divine right," or is it by saying, "If you guys want to go be your own little country, be your own little country"? How about the rest of us? Quebeckers went to the First World War, the Second World War, Korea, and mixed their blood for others. We native people did the same. White people did the same. This is where we're at. Why? Because a small minority in Quebec or the ruling party or the squeaky wheel wants their own little thing, their own little power base.

In Alberta we run into the same thing. You duck into legalities. You know, we should all stop and think a while and look at what is important to the people. Not to the politicians, to the people. I believe this panel here is doing that.

Anyway, I think I've said enough.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Gord.

MR. McINNIS: Yes, thank you. Actually, I'm very pleased that you answered our little ad, that you found our ad and found your way down here so we could hear from you. We haven't heard from a lot of Indian and aboriginal people directly, except for Pearl. We hear from her all the time.

You raise a very interesting point to speculate about: what would happen if Quebec were to separate? How many assumptions about the past can we carry on with? I certainly have some concerns about what would become of the Cree in northern Quebec, but there's the rest of the country as well. Despite all the problems, I've never heard aboriginal people say before, "We want all of you guys to get on a boat and go back where you came from." I've never heard that, although I've heard some newer arrivals try to send some of the people who came here back on a boat where they came from.

9:00

My question is really about the continued involvement of the British Crown in relation to treaties and aboriginal people. It seems to me that the role of the British Crown is fading somewhat in terms of our country, but we still don't have any recognition in the Constitution of our country of the unique position of aboriginal people. It must be a little distressing to read the Meech Lake proposal about French and English being

the founding peoples of our country if you're an aboriginal person, because obviously you were here before either of those. I wonder if you have any thoughts about how that relationship might evolve, or do you think we should really stick to the proposition that the treaty is with the British Crown and leave it at that?

MR. BENOIT: The treaties are legal contracts, and one treaty that I recall states something like, "till the sun shines no more." Now, the Crown accepted an obligation. It has the right to delegate authority, yes, but ultimately it still remains with them, on the word of the Crown by law as long as I live on a reserve. If I don't live on a reserve, I'm my own man, and until 1986 we didn't have a reserve; we had the Indian Act. Even without reserves we had extra laws that applied to us specifically, both good and bad. Now those laws have been removed.

The British Crown accepted as part of the agreement to take care of native peoples. I'm not saying they have to supply them their room and board, but to watch out for their legal rights. When you're dealing with lawyers, you bring in your own lawyer; otherwise, you're going to get shafted. Pardon me, Dave.

The Crown is important, and you watch when any of the royal family come into this country, when they go to the Northwest Territories, which is predominantly native, the reception they get. There's still a lot of royalists there. There seems to be a lot less as we go further the other way, to the east. I'm not saying it's dead in the east. The Crown has by choice delegated its responsibility to the federal government, not the provincial government. The provincial government somehow got involved; I don't know how, but they're involved.

MR. McINNIS: What I'm hearing you say is that you have strong preference that Canada remain united as one country with the British Crown as sovereign to maintain the treaty relationship.

MR. BENOIT: There's nothing wrong with the way it's run right now.

MR. McINNIS: Yeah, basically that's what I'm saying. But I'm wondering if you feel it would be a good idea to put some recognition in the Constitution of Canada of the unique entitlement and rights of aboriginal people in our country over and above the Crown and the treaty arrangements.

MR. BENOIT: If the Constitution is to become the main document of this country, then yes.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Dennis.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gord, again John touched on some of the questions I wanted to asked. We are, of course, now trying, through this process, to find some suggestions, some potential solutions nationwide to what we will do with the future of the country, and some of the points you touched on are crucial in that regard.

Do you have any suggestions to us that we can pass on as we deal with the constitutional issue on how you resolve outstanding land claims issues? That is, I guess, a two-part question. I ask that as one who sees the overlapping claims that there are and wonders how you start, and is there a way you can suggest to us to start?

Second, following directly on John's point, do you believe that there should be in the Constitution specifically recognition of native self-government, and if so, have you got a definition of that for us, or a meaning of self-government? I think the problem I at least have is: how do you define it, what is it, and should it be in there? I can't tell until I know what it is.

So the two questions there: the land claims, any directions you think we should be going, and the self-government question.

MR. BENOIT: Treaty 8, the one for this area, gave the natives the right to reservations or lands at some time in the future, basically because the governments of the time believed there was nothing of value in this part of the world. The only thing of value was the road to the Yukon or to Alaska, so they took the rights they needed, a law, to create a road in the land. In 1927 – or around that period, '25 perhaps – the Cree band of Fort Chipewyan approached the federal government and asked them for a reservation. In December 1986 they finally signed an agreement whereby land was given. In 1980 I applied for land apart from the band, and no land was given; the province won't release it. So I think the process is a little slow in dealing with native land claims. My grandfather didn't live to see a reserve, and he was a young man when they first applied. So I'd say yes, there's a slight problem; they might speed it up a little bit.

The issues are not very difficult, really, when you get down to it. Basically, it boils down to two items, land and money. You know, it's like that commercial on TV: pay me now or pay me later, but you're going to pay. What's cheaper? Let's sit down and get this show on the road. I made a comment to the federal government negotiators, and they wouldn't talk to me for two years. Why? It's not that they were that busy. Come on, you know there's only so many claims. If all you're doing is native claims and you have a department doing it, then there's a problem, and it's not going out to meet the native people, because they're still wherever they were. So as far as native claims, I'd say try speeding it up a little bit and perhaps listening to what is being said or asked for.

As to self-government, it's difficult to conceive, on my part, when I have chosen to live apart from the band, because ultimately we still fall under the federal government laws. What are they asking for? I don't know. Perhaps some of them do know and know there is no unification of a concept of self-government. It's like if I go over to Europe and ask for a definition of self-government. What am I going to get? Then you come across and ask the same question. Hey, you know, there are various tribes that speak different languages, that have different cultures, that live in different locations, that have different needs. You have to ask them either individually or as a group or as a nation or as a united aboriginal entity.

9:10

MR. ANDERSON: Yes, but can I just ask: is that possible, a united aboriginal entity in terms of reaching those kinds of conclusions?

MR. BENOIT: I'd say keep pushing, and it probably is.

MR. ANDERSON: Okay. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Stockwell.

MR. DAY: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Gord, you started out by saying that you weren't prepared when you came tonight because you didn't have a written submission, but the things you were

saying are in your heart and obviously things you've thought deeply about for a long time. So I feel you are as prepared as anyone, and I would hope nobody thinks that because someone has a written submission, it gives any more credibility than someone sitting and speaking from the heart like you do. So I appreciate your comments.

On the issue of land claims, there's a split thing that I want to look at. My ancestors have been on North American soil for something over 300 years, so I have no problem telling people without any shame or anything that I'm a native Canadian. I feel good about that. The land that my ancestors settled on, hunted and fished on not for sport but to survive, and then broke land and grew corn and things like that – now a portion of those people in Quebec are saying today that they don't want to be part of the rest of this. We don't know how many people yet. I understand there could be a referendum that might settle that. So I have some feelings about that. I don't have a lot of legal say right now, but I have some feelings about that because that's where my roots are. Should Quebec take that referendum, should they go ahead and vote that the majority of them say, "We want to govern ourselves totally; we want nothing to do with the rest of Canada," in your estimation, should they still be able to have MPs in the House of Commons? Should they still be able to get transfer payments from the rest of Canada if they need it? If that is going to be their direction, what is your feeling as far as the rest of us in relationship to them?

MR. BENOIT: French Quebec is a small part of southern Quebec. The rest is Indian territory. I heard that on TV, and I liked it. Basically, from my understanding and from my own belief, the native people are still behind the Crown. They want to be accepted as equals within this society, equals that have purchased, through treaty, some rights that are above and some that are not. Like I say, I pay tax like anybody else. If I could get away without paying it, I'd do it, and so would anybody else. But the way it is, it's not going to work. If Quebec and the people of Quebec decide to separate from the rest of Canada, then that answers the question of their representation in Canada. Either you're for it or you're against it.

MR. DAY: What would your feeling be for the aboriginal people in Quebec? Do you have an inkling of that? Let's say they voted and they're voted down.

MR. BENOIT: If they voted against separating from Canada, then I believe Canada has an obligation to protect and maintain the relationship they have, a legal obligation at the very least.

MR. DAY: To the aboriginal people.

MR. BENOIT: To the aboriginal people, which means northern Quebec. We talk about a separation of Quebec. We all envision this province, this huge province. Look at where your population centres are. Look at where your people are. We're not so much down in the south; the native peoples are not so much in Montreal or Quebec City or anyplace else. They're still up in the bush. So I think if Quebec decides, they really should look at other factors as well, not just some politician pushing them on. This is a major decision that could affect their livelihood, their outcome. They may be looking at the resources of an entire province which they no longer own, which by right, I believe, belong to Canada or to the native people, not to Francophone or Anglophone Quebecers, or Italians or anybody else for that matter.

MR. DAY: I appreciate that perspective.

A final question. Let's bring it here to Alberta: the same type of scenario except this time we'd be talking directly, I guess, about your direct ancestors. If a geographical area within Alberta, aboriginal, whether it be reservation land or whatever – if they, let's say, voted for total sovereignty, total self-government, and asked that or required that of the Alberta government and let's say the courts upheld that, should there be any ongoing relationship there in terms of financial, social, whatever it might be, or would it be seen in your view as a totally independent nation on its own, simply landlocked by another nation? What would be the ongoing relationship?

MR. BENOIT: First of all, I'd say that if we ever came to that scenario, we'd better suck up to B.C. pretty fast. While we're at it, then we might as well go for the western part of the Northwest Territories and Yukon, because with their resources, hey, we've got her beat.

As for the native issue, generally in courts it's a white man's court. It's like somebody mentioned earlier. If it was native people dealing with native people, it may have different results. When we have to depend on white lawyers, and the majority of lawyers are white – I prefer to speak of white, because that's the predominant group . . .

MR. DAY: Some people would say lawyers are all the same colour . . .

MR. BENOIT: I'm not too sure about that.

MR. DAY: . . . in deference to our lawyer friends here.

MR. BENOIT: Oh, I have no problem with that.

With the native peoples, if we look at what we call the law or contracts – and again, that's where it's all tied into – we either say that's it, or you remain and take over the obligations that the federal government has lost. There are no in-betweens. You're talking a serious issue when you're talking about splitting up a country. You look at, as an example, a marriage splitting up; there are some repercussions from that. You look at a country splitting up. We as Canadians will lose our identity as Canadians. Who ever heard of Alberta? Maybe they heard of B.C.; it's nice country. Maybe they've heard of Ontario. Alberta – how many people have we got? Two and a half million, if we're lucky. And that's importing some. Saskatchewan? You know, if they have heard of Ontario, that's because they have a big population base. So what chance do we in Alberta really have on our own? What chance does Quebec have on its own? If France won't look at them, who will?

9:20

MR. DAY: So, Gord, then your view, if it came to that, of aboriginal self-government in a certain land area: you don't see that as being totally divorced from, independent from the province they're in?

MR. BENOIT: Step back and look at it. Is the province of Alberta or any other province willing to have a minority group somewhere within its area of power doing their own thing? Not likely. They would still, whether it's Alberta or whether it's Canada, have to live under the laws. Who's got the manpower? Who's got the firepower? That's what it comes down to. That's what it came down to in Oka last summer.

MR. DAY: Thanks, Gord.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Chair is going to have to interrupt at this point, because it seems like we have three more presenters, and the committee will be ending at 10 p.m.

Gord, I appreciate your presentation. On behalf of the committee, I wish to say thank you, but I think we're going to have to move on.

MR. BENOIT: Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Members of the committee, the Chair will now be imposing some time restraints.

The committee would ask Art Rundell, please.

Good evening, Arthur. It's nice to have you with us.

MR. RUNDELL: Good evening.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: As I pointed out, the Chair has been pretty lax so far today because we haven't . . . Now we've got four people. Bearing that in mind, the Chair would ask you to proceed as expeditiously as possible.

MR. RUNDELL: Thank you. Some other constitutional questions that come to my mind to be looked at at this time would be the constitutional validity of the GST. I understand the Alberta government is fighting this in the Supreme Court of Canada. Also the validity of the Income Tax Act as unconstitutional under the BNA Act, and the unconstitutionality of the Bank of Canada Act. I'm of the opinion that these constitutional task forces are just a dog and pony show whipped up by politicians and media to circumvent the real issues that confront this country and the people. This will lead to a federal election where the main election issue will be national unity, and a lot of this other corruption that goes on day in and day out will be overlooked and pushed aside. I think this issue of the national debt and the unconstitutional Bank of Canada Act should be looked at, and the debt should be repudiated in this country.

I wasn't prepared to come here today; I came on very short notice. So that's about all I can say just at the moment.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

Mr. Day.

MR. DAY: Art, thanks, and again you're prepared because you've been thinking about these things obviously. So I appreciate that.

We can't take a lot of time. Repudiating the debt: that's a major concern as far as I'm concerned; also, you're probably aware it's been a bothersome issue for the Alberta government. In terms of provincial debt we've made a commitment to get it retired as we have made a commitment to retire the deficit. What can you offer in a constitutional way: your advice in terms of repudiating the federal debt? What advice could we pass on to our federal counterparts on that issue?

MR. RUNDELL: I think that the Bank of Canada Act gives the chartered banks the right to create money and debt with the stroke of a pen and demand the interest to be paid out of nothing, that this whole thing is unconstitutional, and that these powers should be taken back in the hands of the federal government and taken away from private corporations. I'm not against private lending; I'm against private corporations having the, you know, so-called backing of the federal government to

create new money with the stroke of a pen through the reserve lending ratios and fractional reserve banking.

MR. DAY: I can appreciate that, thanks.

MR. McINNIS: A quick question. When both of you talk about repudiating the debt, you mean repaying the debt, don't you, not "repudiating" as like you don't acknowledge it and say, "I'm not going to pay it"? Is that what you mean, paying it off?

MR. RUNDELL: Definitely not.

MR. McINNIS: No. You mean not acknowledging it; just saying it's not ours to pay?

MR. RUNDELL: The bankers can only be repaid the debt, the principal that was lent out. They cannot repay the interest that was demanded on that debt. The money doesn't exist on the face of the earth, and as the compound interest and the time clocks keep running the debt piles up, and there's no . . . It's an impossibility to pay this debt. It's a scam.

MR. McINNIS: That's what you mean too?

MR. DAY: In terms of my concerns with the Bank Act and the ability to lend money when you only have a small amount on deposit, those are the things I have concern with. We probably would have differences as far as viewing the repudiating of the debt. Retiring the debt for sure. There's some elements of repudiation we could probably discuss further, but I agree with Art in terms of the Bank Act's ability to lend out money when only a small amount is on reserve.

MR. McINNIS: I just wondered if it would work with my car loan, that's all.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Well, thank you very much, Art.

MR. RUNDELL: Thank you for letting me . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The next presenter will be Chad Rudiak.

Greetings. Welcome to our table.

MR. RUDIAK: Good evening to the committee members. I would just like to make eight brief points on my own personal opinion as to what should be included in the Constitution of Canada.

Firstly, I would like for there to be settled all existing land claims and for that to be really fast-tracked, so that in a new Constitution everybody could bargain on an equal basis.

Second, as we talk about special consideration for Canadians and special status, I would like to see special consideration for all Canadians in the form of land reform. I would like to see that only Canadians should be allowed to own Canadian soil, that if you wish to purchase something, it should be an asset that you're a Canadian, a requisite, in fact.

Thirdly, I'd like to see universal health care continued to be guaranteed to all Canadians.

Also, I'd like to see an equal, elected Senate and one Senator for each province or territory so as to guarantee equal representation even of the less populated areas of Canada. Even though they have not so many people, the amount of resources that are contained within that usually vast territory - in other words,

they're defeated in the democracy and getting the short end of the stick.

9:30

It should also be regulated or codified, in my opinion, that each elected Member of Parliament should cast his vote in Parliament as to the opinion of his constituency and its individual members, and not just tout party line and have decisions just pushed through Parliament.

Furthermore, I would like to see a mechanism in place within our Constitution whereby if an elected government does not abide by its election promises to the Canadian people, they'd be removed from power and replaced with a new government in a set period of time. That would just make all these election promises that the governments put in but never really go through with, as the Polar 8 icebreaker – things like that and other things which people cast their votes expecting and actually depending on that are never, never done by the government.

Furthermore, I'd like to see multiculturalism done away with. I feel that it creates too much friction within the individual groups within Canada. I would like to see a culture maintained within the individual culture groups; and the government should not restrict that. If a certain element of our society wishes to keep its culture, that's fine, but I don't think we should be sponsoring it on a federal basis.

Lastly, I would like to abolish the recognition of the British monarchy as a power that has any influence on Canadian political matters – so Brian Mulroney can't ask the Crown or whatever to add more members to the Senate so as to pass something or anything like that – as it's just largely a figurehead.

That is all.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
John.

MR. McINNIS: Just a quick one, Chad. What about the position of aboriginal people with the abolition of the monarchy? We heard about how the treaties are in effect with the British Crown, with the dominion government of the day having acted as an agent for the Crown, and many aboriginal people trace their rights in Canada to the Royal Proclamation of 1763. How do you think that would affect aboriginal people, if we withdrew the Crown?

I certainly agree with you about packing the Senate, but I'm not sure Her Majesty can take the blame for that in any real sense.

MR. RUDIAK: No. Concerning that, I believe that they should be settled and new agreements drawn up. If the aboriginal peoples decide that they wish to be autonomous, then they should be given their own country within Canada, a new country to be created, much like a small section of a province being given its own status, such as Luxembourg or whatever.

MR. McINNIS: I personally think there's some problems with that because aboriginal people are spread all across the country.

A supplementary, if I may. What would you replace the Crown with as the head of state? Would you like to see an elected president or some other such model? You know what I mean by the . . .

MR. RUDIAK: I don't think a figurehead is necessary. We can keep it, if you'd like, as a figurehead on our money. In the structure of our political system I think the main ruling power

is embodied in the Prime Minister. So I don't see how the Queen and the Prime Minister should be affiliated in any way when the Queen is just largely a figurehead.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you.

MR. DAY: Just one quick one?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes. We must be . . . We've got three more to go before 10 o'clock.

MR. DAY: Chad, on the triple E Senate, it's no secret that our government is a major proponent of that, so I don't have difficulty with your support for it. I'm just wondering if you had a special reason for why one Senator per province.

MR. RUDIAK: Just so things can be done a lot quicker, like votes can be taken. I suppose the actual number of – well, just as long as it's equal. If everyone wishes to have two, then we'll have two, but one seems to be fine. Also, I'd like to not have a lifelong term in the Senate. They should be elected, as any other member, with a term.

MR. DAY: Thanks.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

The next person who registered who wished to present is Bob Cameron, and we will go in the order of registration.

MR. CAMERON: I put this together as quickly as I could sitting there listening, having seen it on TV at home.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I find that ABC channel 10 is so effective.

MR. CAMERON: Yeah, but I asked that maybe they could turn it off while I was on, because I'm not quite prepared.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I think we owe a debt of gratitude to channel 10.

MR. CAMERON: I just wanted to make a few points and mention them to the committee. My personal point of view is that I like the way Canada stands, with all its provinces and territories, especially including Quebec. As well, I have lived in both Alberta and Ontario but personally have not really lived anywhere else.

I believe very strongly in a central government, and a very strong central government, for Canada, the biggest reason being to avoid duplications of services, because I do believe there would be a huge duplication of services by all provinces and the territories without a strong government.

I think Canadians as a whole, including myself, have to realize the unique status of Canada as a country. We're a very large country with a very small population. I don't know what all the numbers are because I'm not totally prepared, but it's a very ribbon-style population base, which is very unique for most other countries. There's only a few in the world that even come close to us. I think it's important that all Canadians have a general understanding of this unique situation, and I think perhaps more education on that issue might help. I'm not saying I'm the only one who knows about it – lots of people do – but I don't know if people think about it is what I'm saying. Some of the things – yes, we are a multilingual nation: English, French, and many other languages. As I mentioned, we are a ribbon-style country

in terms of the population base along the border between us and the United States. That really reflects on the transportation networks, on everything in Canada. I did mention that we're a very large country with a small population base as well.

I think a key issue for Canada which I heard discussed earlier is that you need minimum standards for health, education, transportation, and defence. Along with health comes water, so that you can travel anywhere in Canada, you can drink water in Quebec, Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, or anywhere, and you don't have to worry about getting sick or anything. I think that's a very good thing about Canada. That's just one of the many things, and it leads to a certain standard of living that I think most Canadians have come to expect. The more people travel, the more they realize that this isn't everywhere and that we're in a very privileged position, and we sometimes take advantage of that.

I think it's important that we as Canadians realize about the economies of scale: 26 million people spread over this huge country. There's great advantages to having a strong central government looking after environmental issues. Not every province is ever going to agree on the way they all should be dealt with, but if we all deal with them with our own departments, it's going to be about 10 times the cost. No matter that people would think otherwise, I personally believe that it's certainly significantly more. Small companies can be profitable; big companies can be profitable too. The bigger ones can often be more stable, but not always.

I think it's difficult to maintain standards if there is a decentralized government. There's great difficulties when it comes to welfare and UIC, especially if provinces don't have similar standards, because you can have fluctuations in populations moving to different provinces, whoever's got the best deal.

The next biggest one that's going to come up is day care, and if different provinces deal with it differently, I don't know how you would come up with a budget for it. If you were going to offer day care to your employees or workers or whatever that other provinces didn't have, you'd have a lot of people knocking on your door to come into your province, so I think it's very important to have standards in that regard that go across Canada.

The one other thing I do have down here is that the population is not equally spread throughout the provinces and the territories, and that causes some of the problems, but democracy means that each vote is really worth the same amount. It shouldn't be dependent on whether Ontario has 9 million people, or whatever the exact number is, and Alberta has 3 million. A Canadian is a Canadian whichever province they live in. If more live in one province and they have more votes, there's some point to that in terms of each Canadian having paid taxes as well. I'm generalizing a bit here. I think that's an important thing to realize about democracy, that one person's vote can't be worth three votes because they live in a different province or territory. But that doesn't mean there don't have to be some controls to protect that people do not get overridden by the larger provinces, so to speak, or, with the haves and the have-nots, that the haves get stolen from by the have-nots. I shouldn't use those words because they're real clichés. But just to keep it brief and generalized, definitely controls are required.

9:40

I do think there's a great need for cross-province and territory crossings in the sense of trucking, professionals being able to switch provinces. Why does each province have a licensing agency for engineers? Isn't that more bureaucracy and more

money? Some of the engineers are self-governing bodies and that sort of thing, but there are other things, like licences for trucks. Why do you need a different one when we're all Canadians? Yes, the transportation routes are – you're paying somewhat of a tax to drive on people's roads. I realize that, but to some extent I think the more you duplicate these things within the province and within the Canadian government . . . I mean, we have a large deficit, and the more we do of that, the more we bankrupt ourselves, Canada and the provinces. With a strong central government that is listening to provincial input and taking provincial input seriously, I think they can be very effective.

Everybody will always feel cheated because nobody will get what they want, but that's part of life. I don't get everything I want, and that's the way it is. I don't ever expect to, and I have a lot of control over what I'm doing. It's a matter of making decisions. You have X amount of money to deal with, and if you want an expensive home and that's a priority, you can buy it. It might mean you can't have a Jag, but you can have your expensive home, and that's your priority. Maybe that's a bad example. Maybe I should use a different one, but I'm just trying to get a point across, that we as Canadians make priorities and the government and the provinces make priorities, and as Canadians we have to accept some of this. I don't say roll over and die, but we have to accept it.

I personally believe that another part of the understanding is the economies, the scales, the size of our country the way it is. I think there is a need to regard services in other languages where numbers warrant. I definitely think it's worth while. I do have a problem with providing services where the numbers don't warrant, but only from the cost point of view. I'm certainly not against it otherwise, and I think there are things that can be done to help address the problem in a less full-blown way even where the numbers don't warrant. There's got to be another way as opposed to them having to have a separate school where the numbers don't warrant. Couldn't a separate classroom within a similar school . . . We have to make some compromises so that we don't bankrupt the government, the municipalities, the provincial government. There are a lot of people involved here.

I guess my fourth point here is Bill 101. I believe that's the language law Bill in Quebec, and it's not something I would jump up and down for joy about. Certainly I didn't like it when it came out that we had English and French signs – I was in Ontario at the time – but they only wanted French signs. That didn't seem fair; it didn't seem part of bilingualism. At the same time, I had just traveled in Europe. I didn't have any problem getting around there, and most of the signs were in languages I'd never seen before. I did manage. I have been to Quebec and Montreal, and I had absolutely no problem when I traveled in Montreal. The people were marvelous, and I speak French so poorly that they all were ready to speak English just so they wouldn't hear their language destroyed, I think. They were all very polite to me. I enjoyed myself there, and I had no problems getting around at all.

I guess the fifth point is that I am not a big supporter of the triple E Senate. I won't lay out what it is. I think there has to be some control of the smaller provinces versus the larger provinces, but I still have problems with democracy, as each person has a vote. That doesn't mean each province or each territory; it means each person. However, because we are a confederation of different provinces, there has to be respect for the different provinces, and there has to be some mechanism for it. I don't know what the mechanism should be personally, but

I do have trouble with equal votes when there are not equal numbers: if I lived in a different province, my vote's worth three, whereas if I lived somewhere else, it's worth a third or one, whatever the ratio is.

I'm sorry I'm not better prepared, but those are my thoughts. I guess the other thing is that there are a number of things the federal government spends money on. There's a list of, like, Agriculture; Communications; Consumer and Corporate Affairs; Employment and Immigration; Energy, Mines and Resources; Environment; Fisheries and Oceans; External Affairs; Finance; Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Really, if you thought about each province dealing with each one of these things separately . . . I'm not saying they don't have to have representatives, but there's a difference between a whole office, a whole building of people looking after these financially and economically for the foundation of Canada and the provinces themselves, or dealing with this in a more co-operative effort. Justice, the Solicitor General, National Defence, Labour, National Health and Welfare, all the individual parliaments, Public Works – of which there's also municipal – regional industrial expansion, Secretary of State, science and technology, administration and taxation, Transport, the Treasury Board, Veterans Affairs: these are just some key headings. Each one of them has many, many subheadings. It's incomprehensible to me to decentralize and have every province look after that. That's part of being Canada.

We're 26 million people trying to make a go of it in the world on the world scale, and we are and we can because we're smart people. I think playing with that is not, in my opinion, to the advantage of Canadians: Albertans, Ontarians, Quebecers. That's my personal opinion, though, and that's really all I have to say.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Sheldon.

MR. CHUMIR: Just really briefly, Bob. Thank you for your presentation. It was very good, regardless of the time. You mentioned you want minimum standards for health, education, environment; you mentioned some social programs. If I understand you precisely and so there's no mistake, you would like those to be established by the federal government?

MR. CAMERON: Yes. I'm a strong supporter of minimum standards set by a governing body that are equal across Canada, so that when you travel you shouldn't notice a border when you travel from one . . . I mean, we're all Canadians. Maybe that's a little idealistic. There are going to be some differences. However, I think it's important.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Barrie.

MR. CHIVERS: Very briefly, would you support constitutional entrenchment of environmental protection?

MR. CAMERON: Well, the automatic answer is yes, but I want to think about it for two seconds.

I think environmental protection is very important. As to whether it should be in the Constitution, I don't know if that's the right place for it. To me it's very important.

MR. CHIVERS: A high priority.

MR. CAMERON: It's a high priority, but I don't know if the Constitution is the right place. I haven't thought about it enough.

MR. CHIVERS: Thanks.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Sorry to move on, but we still have two to try to complete by 10 o'clock. Thank you very much, Bob.

MR. CAMERON: Well, thanks for hearing me.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Allan Campbell, please. Allan, you can take that one away and put yours down so there'll be no confusion.

MR. CAMPBELL: Everybody knows who I am.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Welcome.

MR. CAMPBELL: I've got a concern for adopted children who can't find out who they are, and with everybody else screaming and hollering for all their rights and privileges, I don't see why they shouldn't have the right to find out who they are and not be lied to by anybody. There are a lot of messed up kids, and there are hundreds of thousands more getting messed up. I see them every day in group homes, on the street, and everywhere. These kids are messed up, and there are studies that have been done that know how many of them are in alcoholic situations, drug situations, jail situations. The circle goes on, and I know from experience.

That should be in the Constitution. I don't see any reason why it isn't. Here again, universality from one province to the next: you can find out in one province, and you can't in the other. Alberta, I think, is the worst province in Canada from what the organizers say. It's a brick wall. You're insulted when you go and try to find out and are told that you're ungrateful and a lot of other things, along with being messed up.

9:50

If Quebec is allowed to opt out of Canada through a vote, in 50 years, 20 years do the Asian people take western Canada and join China? I think this is something we should really be thinking about. We have our Prime Minister over there encouraging a lot of these people coming over. I've got no complaints about it, but I'm looking down the road. Do we have a vote and say, "Well, we'll take B.C. and what's left of Alberta"? What happens to the native people in Quebec?

As far as I'm concerned, any English Canadian who tells French Canadians that they can take Quebec and go should be shot for treason, and then we'll have a trial after. And the same thing for . . . I feel strongly about this country. My adopted parents, both their families fought, and most of them never came back. The ones that did came back with brain damage. I feel very strongly that people are playing around with the country of Canada for a few whimsical political gains. That's all it is.

Deficit spending has to be outlawed, no ifs, ands, or buts about it. I have to control my spending in my house so that I have enough to make things go around so I'm not putting my kids in debt. The country has to take the responsibility to do the same and quit the party pork-barreling at election time.

The competition in Canada. There are people who are running legitimate businesses, struggling day by day. They hire 10 people. Two of these people don't like their boss, so they go

to the government, get a government grant, start up alongside another shop, cut this guy's throat, and the end result is that neither one of them makes money, and the guy who had a legitimate business ends up going broke. We've experienced lots of this in Alberta. Maybe we could start teaching people in school about investments. I think most of us Canadians don't know how to invest, and we're being shafted left, right, and centre. We have a body that a government runs and every time you go there - well, they don't cover that.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Just a second. Dennis, were you . . .

MR. ANDERSON: No.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: John, were you . . . Well, thank you very much for coming, Allan.

Our last presenter that the Chair has notice of is Jan Loimand. Good evening. Welcome.

MR. LOIMAND: Good evening.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Sorry to be sort of rushed right now.

MR. LOIMAND: Oh, that's okay. I haven't got that much to say. I'd just like to say that Mr. Bob Cameron echoed most of my feelings.

Quite frankly, I have a message for the politicians here. I think the biggest problem in this country is that we have too many of you. I see no reason why we have to have the levels of jurisdiction we have. We only have 26 million people. We have an economy that is smaller than the state of California. Alberta has a population smaller than the city of Toronto. Yet we have to have 10 Premiers, 10 cabinets, 10 sets of legislation, which for all intents and purposes are identical or should serve the same need. We don't need this many politicians. We don't need this much government.

What maybe we should look at - everybody is talking about holding together or repairing what we have now. Maybe it's time to redesign this country. Maybe we shouldn't have provinces and territories. All Canadians should be equal whether they live in a province or a territory. Politicians do this country a great disservice because everybody tends to fight. The municipal politicians blame the province because the province won't give them the money. Why don't the municipal politicians tell the province, "You should raise taxes"? Why don't the provincial politicians turn around and say to the federal government, "You have to raise taxes so you can give us more money, because if we raise taxes, then we have to suffer the consequences"?

Basically, the provinces as they now exist are an anachronism. There was a time when this country, because of its size, had to have decisions made locally. In the current age of technology with communications and faxes and God knows what else, there is no need that all decisions have to be made at a local level. We have to design this country and differentiate between policy and administration. There's no reason I cannot have a Canadian driver's licence, a Canadian health insurance card, a Canadian licence plate. For the sake of sentimentality there's no reason why we can't retain an Alberta licence plate.

I notice these pins you were handing out. We're talking about saving Canada, and you're giving out Alberta pins. You have a pin out there with the Canadian flag, and showing an immense,

I guess, lack of sense of protocol, you put Alberta on top and Canada underneath. That to me is the same as having a flagpole and having the Alberta flag on top and the Canadian flag on the bottom, and that is just simply not done.

Maybe what the politicians have to do is stop fighting and decide what you can do to save this country; that is, maybe whether some people say whether the monarchy should continue or we could go to an elected president and maybe a Senate and a Commons and the provinces can become administrative regions where all Canadians have the same rights. Then we don't have to worry about when I cross a border what the speed limit is. All Canadians should pay the same taxes and health care should be universal. Some provinces pay for it out of their sales tax. In Alberta we have lower income tax, but we pay Alberta health care. Maybe we should have . . . We can be the same, but we can also be different. By saying we can be the same, we can all be treated the same.

Remember the government is here to serve the people; we are not here to serve you. At some point in time the government is going to have to meet the needs of the people because the history of governments which have failed to meet the needs of the people is not very good. I realize it's a tough question asking all the Premiers to resign and turn the Legislatures into museums, but it just might be what would save the country.

What I'd just like to add here is that, as you're probably aware, in the maritimes now they are talking about maritime union again. Over 15 years ago they were discussing maritime union. We had a very late night at a press club in Fredericton. They were discussing this thing with the late Richard Hatfield. One of the reporters present posed a very interesting question. If you unify these three provinces, which two-thirds of you politicians are going to resign? Because we won't need you. Quite frankly, I think we no longer need 10 provincial Legislatures, because I don't see why, in Alberta's legislation, in all the areas that are provincial jurisdictions right now, that you need 10 separate sets of rules.

You know, you can't resolve native rights because either it's a federal jurisdiction or it's a provincial jurisdiction, and so the battle goes on. We can't have uniform closing hours in this country, because it's a mess of jurisdictions. I mean, a municipality passes a bylaw, and the next thing you know business is building outside the municipality boundaries. We need a level playing field for everybody.

As the other gentleman said, there was a case years ago back east where an industry wished to locate on the Restigouche River between Quebec and New Brunswick. The pulp mill was eventually placed on the side of the river of the province which gave them the biggest amount of money or the slackest environmental laws. Now, as far as I'm concerned, if I'm getting my water out of the Restigouche River and somebody is dumping effluent into it, I don't really care whether that effluent is coming from Quebec or New Brunswick. I use that example because there you have a river which is a boundary between two provinces. The rules for the location of that mill should be the same on either side of the river.

Basically, that's all I have to say. I guess I'm fed up with the number of politicians in this country and as long as you . . . You know, whenever I hear about disunity in the country, it's politicians that are proclaiming how they can't get along. I don't hear Canadians not getting along, but I do hear politicians not getting along. I'm really getting tired of Premiers that would rather be heads of their own states. Well, that's not the way it is. The provinces are not states in their own rights. They are

basically provinces, and maybe they should revert to being administrative areas and different colours on the map.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Sheldon, you'll wind things up for us? It's almost 10 o'clock.

MR. CHUMIR: Do I take it, Mr. Loimand, that you would be saying, in other words, that you would like to see things like our health programs, social programs, education, environment standards set by the federal government?

10:00

MR. LOIMAND: Standards set by the federal government, and they can be administrated at the local level, naturally, like the way you'd run any corporation. You have a head office, and then you have standards and the divisions that steward those standards. You know, maybe we should try running this country like a business. Why should a child in grade 12 in Alberta, when it comes to straight core curriculum, be studying something that is very different from a child in New Brunswick? Because the fact of the matter is that we are moving into an era where people are going to have to be more mobile. I don't know if any of the provinces are doing a really great job on graduating functionally literate people. Like, I mean anybody now can graduate from high school, and it's become a right to graduate from high school. That's only the beginning. Graduation from high school is not a right; it's something which has to be earned. But if you lower the standards so everybody can, then you no longer have a meaningful benchmark.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

MR. LOIMOND: Thank you for your time.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

On behalf of the committee the Chair would like to express its appreciation to everyone who made presentations here today and to the audience who attended, which was augmented vastly by ABC channel 10, for which we are all deeply appreciative.

The audience is somewhat different this evening than it was this afternoon when we started, and the Chair neglected to introduce the members of the committee, so in closing we'll quickly do that. On my right is the Hon. Nancy Betkowski, the MLA for Edmonton-Glenora. On her right is Stockwell Day, the MLA for Red Deer-North. I'm going to skip the next one because I'm winding up with him. The smiling fellow with the beard is Sheldon Chumir, the MLA for Calgary-Buffalo. The also equally smiling fellow with a different-coloured beard is John McInnis, the MLA for Edmonton-Jasper Place. Across from him is the newest member of the Alberta Legislature, the MLA for Edmonton-Strathcona, Barrie Chivers. Next to him is the MLA for Lesser Slave Lake, Pearl Calahasen. On my left is the Hon. Dennis Anderson, the MLA for Calgary-Currie, and my name is Stan Schumacher, and I represent the constituency of Drumheller.

We've all been the happy guests today of the Hon. Norm Weiss, the MLA for Fort McMurray, who would like to say a few closing words.

MR. WEISS: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, but most of all, thank you all for coming and, more importantly, for listening. The briefs varied from the a.m. to the p.m. Some were very succinct, one-issue briefs; others were very broad and emotional and truly emphasizing one point, I believe, in all, and

that was caring for the country we live in. I'd like to echo your comments, Mr. Chairman, and thank all those who came, not only those who presented the briefs but those who sat and listened and particularly to ABC's viewing audience as well.

To those who are not aware, my role here as a host was to be an observer and not a participant. You within the community have an opportunity to echo your concerns to me on an ongoing basis, and I welcome that and solicit it, but I was not here to be intervening in any way with the briefs or the presenters. I could say it in another way: you're stuck with me, I guess, for the time being, until maybe an election changes things. The objective was to get the committee here, which I think has been accomplished, and I think it's going to be awfully tough for them in their deliberations.

I would like to invite them back to the community on another occasion. There's an old saying that we have that if you drink the water from the Athabasca and taste it, you'll always come back. I would say that to some of our people who are concerned environmentally. That's before Al-Pac and after Al-Pac, that you'll be able to drink and enjoy the water.

But I wish you well, as I say, in your deliberations. Thank you very much for coming. Please come back again and enjoy our hospitality.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

[The committee adjourned at 10:04 p.m.]