

7:03 p.m.

Wednesday, May 29, 1991

[Deputy Chairman: Mr. Schumacher]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It is now past 7 p.m., and the Select Special Committee on Constitutional Reform will now please come to order.

We are fortunate this evening to have with us students from Harry Collinge high school. The Chair understands that there will be two groups of three presenting, and we will depart from our normal practice of having 15-minute segments. The committee does feel that it would like to wind up its proceedings by 8:30 at the latest, and we hope that will allow everybody sufficient time to make their presentations.

The committee would invite the first group of three to come to the table; that is, Tanya Puderbach, Shawn Rooks, and Cindy Petrone. On behalf of the committee I'd like to say welcome to all of you.

Before we proceed, I will introduce the members of this committee to you. Starting on my far left is our newest Member of the Legislative Assembly of the province of Alberta, Mr. Barrie Chivers, who is the MLA for Edmonton-Strathcona. Seated next to him is Pearl Calahasen, the MLA for Lesser Slave Lake, and our administrator, John McDonough. Next to me is the Hon. Dennis Anderson, the MLA for Calgary-Currie. I am Stan Schumacher, and I represent the Drumheller constituency. On my right is the Hon. Nancy Betkowski, MLA for Edmonton-Glenora; on her right, Stockwell Day, who represents Red Deer-North in the Assembly. Next to him is Sheldon Chumir, the MLA for Calgary-Buffalo, and finally John McInnis, the MLA for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

Again, welcome, and we want to express our appreciation for your interest in this process and your interest in the future of the country by taking the time and effort to prepare a presentation for our committee. So with that we will invite you to make your presentation in any manner you see fit.

Thank you.

MR. ROOKS: This brief will contain an outline of the proposed government. You must recognize that the outline is an example that reflects our views as citizens of Canada. The outline is not final and has lots of room for improvement. At the end of the report several questions will be answered concerning other views dealing with national unity.

The proposed government will contain three levels: one, president and vice-president; two, federal council; three, provincial council and representative. The president and vice-president would have no special powers other than to preside over the federal council. The federal council will be made up of a leader from each province. Their most important duty is to solve problems between provinces and come to a reasonable decision that satisfies the majority of the people. These problems may deal with industry, environment, transportation, and technological affairs. The federal council, which consists of the leaders of the provinces, is appointed on an annual basis. In this manner the people will have a stronger say in the government. Each provincial council has a responsibility to provide money for defence and to provide the federal council with funds to carry out the national interest. Their representative is chairman of the council and is leader of that province. The federal council is elected on an annual basis to ensure that the people's wishes are carried out.

This is a radical change from our current form of government. However, the most important thing in this government will be

the elimination of the party system. The party system does not work. The leader of the party does not represent the people; instead, he or she represents the party. Our current system started out with good intentions, but it ended up with the elected party to control our government and not to represent the people's view.

The voting system would change also. Instead of making one choice, you would number the candidates from favourite to least favourite, as shown in the example on page 3. With our current system 35 percent of the people may want Yeltsin and his Communist party to win, while 65 percent of the people don't want the Communist party to win. So dividing their votes between Mulroney, Clark, and MacKenzie - MacKenzie gets 21 percent, Mulroney gets 22 percent, and Clark gets 21 percent - therefore, Yeltsin's Communist party wins even though they did not have the majority of the people on their side.

MISS PUDERBACH: We understand that every country has different needs and they're all unique, but we still feel that no province should get special treatment. I mean, everyone who's living in that province feels that they should get the same treatment everyone else is getting, and that's true. Everyone should get the same treatment because that's what Canada is pretty all well about: fairness and the same treatment and equality among everyone else.

We feel that the provinces all together would do really good operating just with trade and defence, because sometimes when you go somewhere - I find even myself, I'll say that I'm Albertan and not Canadian. I forget that I'm Canadian, and people will know where I'm from. I think that we would still operate pretty good if we just operated, like, had our own provinces and we are all in charge of whatever and just communicated with all the other provinces for trade and defence.

We also feel that the way to represent what we want and what the people want is to have the triple E Senate, where it's elected: to have people elected and push the power as much as we possibly can down to the people, so that it's not just the government, the parties in there, and they get to do what they feel the party wants. There'll be a vote if there's something that the parties can't decide on, and then the people would get to decide on what they want.

Also, what it means to be a Canadian. To me it means freedom of speech and to be free and to, like, look around and not say, "Oh, gosh; I can't say this or I can't say that because what if someone hears me and they go and tell the police or something like that," and then, boom, I'm in jail, you know. I just feel that that's what to be Canadian is. But also I find myself saying lately that Canada is a little mixed up. Like, what's going on? What's going to happen? How's the world going to turn out? How is Canada going to turn out? What's going to happen to us? Are we going to have to, like, suffer in the end? I don't really want to suffer in the end. I mean, when I get older I want to make sure that I'm going to be taken care of. I don't want to feel that I have to go out there and work when I'm, like, 70 years old, you know, because there's no old-age pension or something like that.

MISS PETRONE: Okay. We find the Charter to be a good thing to have, but the problem we have is in section 33. It basically says that the government can override what the people want. But the government should work with us, not against us; they should transfer the power to the people as much as they can. The provinces must have a say in taxes, inflation, and interest rates. Canada must have a federal tax, with each

province with its own tax for each need they have. Interest rates should be about 6 percent, and inflation should never be higher than 4 percent. The federal tax must be 5 percent and no hidden tax, and the provincial tax must be 10 percent.

The federal powers are responsible for justice and security, national defence, interior, finance, economic affairs, transport, energy, and foreign affairs. With the 5 percent tax the Canadian government gets from every province, it could pay for these responsibilities that the federal government has. That way the provinces know what is required and can fulfill the responsibility for these needs, and the federal government has less to worry about and fewer needs to care for. This will have the government working for the people, not for itself.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That concludes the presentation?

MISS PETRONE: Yeah.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Could I just exercise the chairman's prerogative and ask a question first regarding the tax? Is the 5 percent federal and 10 percent provincial on income, or is that a goods and services type tax?

7:13

MISS PUDERBACH: I believe that's a goods and services type.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That's like a sales tax on practically everything that is sold, not an income tax.

MISS PUDERBACH: Yes. Actually, one other point I'd like to say is: Alberta and B.C. – like Alberta pays the highest hidden tax. We pay the most tax, even though it doesn't seem like we do. We have lots of hidden tax. That hidden tax shouldn't be in there, because that's how come we're feeling we're being cheated. It's true in a way, because we're paying so much for tax and we're supporting so many other people. We shouldn't have that hidden tax in there. We should just have the tax like everyone else.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Could you give me an example of what you see as a hidden tax?

MISS PUDERBACH: Okay. We have this chart in our books, and it said that Alberta was the highest for paying taxes and that lots of these taxes were hidden taxes that we didn't even know, like on food and that. You go to B.C. and other places, food prices are going to be a lot down, clothes prices will be a lot down, even with the tax. You come here to Alberta: you have the price plus you then have the tax, and it's way above what they pay in B.C. and other provinces. I don't feel it should be in there.

MS CALAHASEN: Is it contribution of transfer payments that she's talking about, Mr. Chairman, in terms of what we're looking at here?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yeah.

MS CALAHASEN: And it's quite a different picture in terms of . . .

I think she's saying that the federal transfer payments that are being paid to the provinces versus what we're paying out or are being taken out of us are not the same as other provinces, and B.C. and we are the only ones.

MR. ANDERSON: It's not that we're paying more taxes overall; it's that more of our taxes are going out of province than money coming into the province.

MS CALAHASEN: That's what you're saying, right?

MISS PUDERBACH: Yeah, that too. I also know that there is, like, something in tax. Everyone knows that. There is some hidden tax.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Well, I don't know about these hidden taxes. I guess I should know if they are there. I don't. I honestly don't know about these hidden taxes you're referring to.

MS CALAHASEN: Give us some examples, maybe.

MISS PUDERBACH: Well, like I was saying, with clothes, okay? I went to B.C. and bought a jean jacket, and it cost me \$90 with the tax. I came here, and it was about \$120 with tax. That was when the GST was in, and that was quite a bit more. It was the same jacket, the same store, and I was just – like, whoa.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Well, I would suggest that the difference is not in tax; it's in the retail markup. I would suggest that it's the merchant who is making more money in Alberta on that product than the merchant is making in B.C. I really would.

Anyway, I think you've put a lot of thought into this presentation, and the first questioner will be Dennis.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I'd like to congratulate you on the presentation and to say that if there's anything Canada needs right now, it's new ideas and dramatic new ideas. You certainly have those in this proposal.

With respect to the tax again, is the tax seen that these are all of the taxes? Would there also be personal income taxes, or would this be the total that you see?

MISS PETRONE: I believe this is it.

MR. ANDERSON: You believe this is it?

MISS PETRONE: Yeah.

MR. ANDERSON: Okay. Cindy, what happens, then, if the needs – schooling, for example, and the roads and the hospitals in Alberta – outstretch that, and we can't pay for them with that 10 percent? Do we go into debt, or do we have fewer schools? Any thoughts on that?

MISS PETRONE: No. I'm pretty well stuck on that one.

MR. ANDERSON: That's okay. We're trying to explore them with you just in case you have some thoughts on that. That's one of the problems we have with setting tax levels, but I think we'd all love to have that tax level only.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I think the important thing is that you feel that whatever the tax is, it should be double to support the services that you feel should be provided at the provincial level as to what is going to be provided at the federal level, because you say 5 percent for federal and 10 percent for a province. Is that right?

MISS PETRONE: Yeah. That's right.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay. That gives an order of magnitude anyway.
John.

MR. McINNIS: This committee is trying to determine what position Alberta should take in terms of the future of the Constitution of our country. I appreciate the suggestions that you've made about the proposed government structure. They're certainly some ideas to kick around. I wonder: have you discussed this together? Are you sort of all of the same mind, or did you write this in bits and pieces; each of you wrote a different part of it?

MISS PUDERBACH: We're actually of the same mind.

MR. McINNIS: Are you? Well, let me ask you, whoever wants to answer: do you feel that there will be a Canada in the future, and do you think that . . . Well, let's start with that.

MISS PUDERBACH: Oh, yeah, there will be a Canada. It just has to change. Right now it's like we're stuck. We don't know which way we're going. We're not going backwards. We're not going forwards. We're just stuck. We're staying still; we're in neutral. In a way, it just has to change.

MR. McINNIS: Sheldon and I were sort of puzzling through this one answer to the question where you write:

If you meet a Canadian in the U.S. and ask him or her what their nationality is, they would say Albertan instead of Canadian. They already believe that their province is independent from Canada, and is only linked by trade and government.

Why do you say that?

MR. ROOKS: Well, the reason that happens - I've gone to the States and I've met other Canadians down there, and I've asked them that. It's just like people subconsciously don't really think about Canada as a whole. They think about Alberta. Federalism is just a word or something like that that they give money to every year, so most of them just don't really think of it as a federal government. They think of it as just a word. They don't really recognize our entire country.

MR. McINNIS: Isn't that really because you already established that you're both Canadian? You already know that. It's a question of . . .

MR. ROOKS: Well, then when I was asked questions about that down in the States, I didn't ever tell anybody I was really Canadian. My aunt and uncle knew, but that was about it.

MR. McINNIS: Okay.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Stockwell.

MR. DAY: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. There's some great ideas in here. Obviously you put a lot of thought into it, and we appreciate that.

On the federal council consisting of "... leaders of the provinces, is appointed," you've got here "on a two annual basis." Does that mean every two years?

MR. ROOKS: That's a typo error. It's annual, every year.

MR. DAY: It's annual. Would the election process be annual?

MR. ROOKS: Well, it would be in a way. Okay; the election process would be every two years, but then the leader . . . For example, just say you guys were the provincial council or the federal council. You would pick yearly the person who would lead you. So say, for example, Nancy Betkowski was in charge and then just say she wasn't doing a very good job - like, she was doing okay, but there were problems between the provinces - you'd just say they put you in charge or something for the second year.

MR. DAY: That'd be good.

I appreciate your concern, too, because we hear it a lot in terms of having the power closer to the people. You've also designated here which power should be federal and which should be provincial. You're also asking to combine a triple E Senate in with this, I understand.

MR. ROOKS: Uh huh.

MR. DAY: I'm just curious, when you're thinking of Alberta - and you obviously feel strongly about your province, which is appreciated - that under federal jurisdiction one of the ones you have there is energy. I'm wondering why, in light of the fact that one of the biggest ongoing problems we have with the federal government is what they from time to time would like to do with our energy policy. As you know, the national energy program in the early '80s devastated the economy of this province and the energy industry. Do you have some special feelings why you think the federal government should have control over that?

MR. ROOKS: Well, because there'd be a lot of controversy between the provinces over energy. Just say that you build a dam for hydroelectricity. Well, that river might run through another province, and now they don't get that river or something. So they'd be pretty upset, because it affects something with them. That way it could be easily handled out. For example, the federal council could talk about that, because you have the leader from each province and they can sit there and have negotiations about it.

MR. DAY: Oh, right. I see. I missed that step. So you talk about a representative from each province negotiating among the provinces.

MR. ROOKS: Yes.

MR. DAY: Okay. I see what you're getting at.

Thanks. I really appreciate the work you've spent on this.

7:23

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Pearl.

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr Chairman. It's really nice to see students come and present some of their views to us. I, like my colleagues, would like to congratulate you for ensuring that you did come and present your views and for the amount of work and the thought you've put into your presentation.

I want to ask a question just for clarification. On the question "Should all provinces have the same constitutional responsibilities?" you say, "No, each province is unique." Yet there was the comment you made, Tanya, that no province should get special treatment but should be treated equally. I'm not exactly

sure what you mean by that, whether or not it means equally in the sense of equal representation, the equal kind of powers they should have, or should there be more power given to them or should there be more power given to the central government? What do you mean by that particular statement?

MISS PUDERBACH: Okay. There should be more power given to the provinces, and the provinces should be equal in every way. Like, Quebec wants their language and that. Okay; that's fine. But in a way it's not, because we're a country. We should all have the same rights; we should have the same responsibilities to take care of. No province should have one responsibility to take care of and the other ones: "Well, we'll see about you later"; you know, it doesn't matter and they don't get it.

MS CALAHASEN: So in terms of the negotiation, basically all provinces should be able to negotiate what they want or need, or all provinces should have what they feel they should have rather than equal distribution of everything throughout?

MISS PUDERBACH: Well, there should be equal distribution throughout. I don't feel there should be more power pushed up to the federal government. I think there should be more pushed down to the provincial government. The provincial government should get some more to decide on, but every province should get the same responsibilities to decide on.

MS CALAHASEN: Okay; that's good.

The other question I want to follow up on is: what are your views or the views of the class in terms of the aboriginal rights issue?

MISS PUDERBACH: The aboriginal rights issue? Well, something like 500 or 700 settlements are unclaimed. We feel they should be settled, because the aboriginal people were here and we can't just keep moving them around and saying: "Well, we'll deal with you later. You've got to move right now, because we want to take a train through here or this or that." We have to deal with them now because the problem's getting bigger and bigger and we can't let it go on any longer. We have to take responsibility for what we've started and finish it.

MS CALAHASEN: So basically you're saying that any settlement that should be done should be completed. How about the aboriginal rights to be entrenched in the Constitution?

MISS PUDERBACH: Yeah, I think they should have some rights.

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Next is Barrie.

MR. CHIVERS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for coming out this evening. I see under your model of government that you've assigned jurisdiction over language to the provincial council rather than the federal council. Let's assume that your federal council is delivering some services in the jurisdiction of the province. External Affairs, let's say, has a defence outpost someplace, a Canadian Forces base. Would they be entitled to determine the language that base would operate on, or would they be governed by the provincial jurisdiction's rules?

MR. ROOKS: Well, I believe what they should do when something like that happens is try to get people who speak the language in that province and station them there. If they can't do that, the province wouldn't have a say with the base. They could just go: okay, if you come into town or something like that, it doesn't matter what language you speak but the official language here is a certain language. Like, say I went to Mexico and was speaking English or I went to France and spoke a little bit of English, it doesn't really matter, but the official language in France, for example, is French.

MR. CHIVERS: What would happen, let's say, if they went to an area where there's a majority French population in Alberta, in the Falher district or some place like that where there's a large population of French people, and located the base there?

MR. ROOKS: Well, it wouldn't really matter. They're not really into this. They're not part of the province. They're part of the main government, the federal government, and they're just sort of renting provincial land.

MR. CHIVERS: Okay. Just on your hidden taxes, I was wondering, Tanya, if maybe you were thinking of something like health care premiums on medicare, where some provinces don't charge health care premiums and they're paid out of their regular taxes. I mean, I don't want to quibble with my colleagues at the table here, but where it's paid out of the general taxation revenue in some provinces and paid from a special form of taxation, for comparative purposes, people often measure the true level of taxation by including factors such as health care premiums.

MS BETKOWSKI: Some would argue that there are more hidden in other provinces than here.

MR. CHUMIR: I take it this is for me?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes, Sheldon. You're also recognized.

MR. CHUMIR: By the way, I very much appreciate you going to the trouble of demonstrating your spirit of citizenship by developing this paper and coming before this committee. However, as a lawyer I tend to be somewhat quarrelsome, and I don't think you guys should get a totally free ride on this thing.

I want to return to the question John McInnis asked earlier about your portion that - you made comments that if you meet a Canadian in the U.S. and ask him or her what their nationality is, they will say Albertan instead of Canadian. They already believe their province is independent from Canada. I must say that's really not what I've been hearing from Albertans all my life. In fact, I don't sense that's the view of people who have appeared before us here. I had a questionnaire in my constituency, and out of 125 constituents 90 percent said they're Canadians first and Albertans second. In a Grande Prairie classroom the other day we asked the students if they would raise their hands as to whether they felt they were Albertans first or they were Canadians. Two said Albertans and about 18, I think, was the number we got saying Canadians. So this is quite a surprise to me.

Now, this may be what you're seeing, but might I ask this: aside from your observations and the few people you've run into down in the United States, on what evidence, on what basis, are you making this statement? Do you have any polls?

MR. ROOKS: Not really. But see, I'm from Ontario. When I first moved out to Alberta, there were a lot of problems because I was from Ontario and was not Albertan. It was sort of like, "Oh, I'm from Ontario and you're an Albertan, so I'm superior," or something like that. Like, the provinces quarrel with each other. It's sort of like two little kids. That's pretty well what the country's like now: a bunch of little kids arguing about who's better and who's worse. That's basically it.

MR. CHUMIR: Well, I think there is a fair and perhaps an unfair share of squabbling.

Might I suggest to you that you go back to your class, maybe other classes and people, and ask on a somewhat scientific basis, or as scientific as you can make it, whether people consider themselves to be Canadians or Albertans. I suspect you'll find that they say Canadians. If we happen to come back, as it's not impossible, I think you may find that what you're able to express on behalf of other people you run into and the majority is that there's a really strong loyalty and feeling for this country.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Any further questions? If not, on behalf of the committee, we'll thank this phase of the presentation for your hard work and interest in this subject.

We'll invite Darren Chidlaw, Eleni Korogonas, and Magdalena Waluga.

MR. CHIDLAW: Okay. We don't believe a unitary system would work in Canada because Canada is so large and there are so many different needs to be met. We don't feel the federal government should have as many responsibilities as they do now; we feel the provinces should. The federal government should control currency, external affairs, and immigration, and education because we feel each child should learn the same thing and have equal educational rights. We think the provinces should control a lot more because they are closer to the people and closer to what the people need. They should control pretty much everything.

7:33

What do we think about language in Canada? We think the provinces should control languages. Depending on what the majority is speaking in that province, we believe they should be able to speak that. We believe Canada's new system should be structured around the Swiss system of cantons. We have looked at this system, and we believe it works well.

We'd invite you to ask any questions you may have.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Nancy.

MS BETKOWSKI: Are you still proposing that the three councils your other group . . .

MISS WALUGA: No.

MS BETKOWSKI: This is totally separate.

MR. CHIDLAW: Yes.

MS BETKOWSKI: Okay. Thanks.

I'd like to explore your recommendation, which is similar to the previous group's, on language rights being given to provinces

and, I guess, ask you why you came to that conclusion and seek your thoughts on Quebec as part of that policy.

MISS WALUGA: We believe each province should have its own language rights. They would have their own constitutions; therefore, they could control languages and have one or two official languages. This would give Quebec their own right to be able to speak French. We think a few other provinces would choose English and French.

MR. CHIDLAW: Or other languages possibly.

MISS WALUGA: Yeah. In Alberta maybe it would be Ukrainian, because there are many Ukrainians in Alberta. Or in B.C. . . .

MR. CHIDLAW: Japanese possibly.

MISS WALUGA: Yeah. Chinese and English.

MS BETKOWSKI: I think it would be fine if Canadians would all stay in the same place and never move, but what happens if an individual moves from one province where the use of French, for example, is without any control – it's freely used – to another province where it is not? Should that person be given special rights in that other province?

MISS KOROGONAS: We feel that if a person decides to move to another province, they are taking the responsibility of also changing their language rights into what the province believes. They are choosing to move from one province to another, and they have to obey the Constitution they are going to enter.

MS BETKOWSKI: I see.

Just a closing comment. I'd remind you that in some of the Swiss cantons until very recently women didn't have the right to vote, so don't forget it.

MR. CHIDLAW: We believe that would be in the constitutions in most provinces.

MS BETKOWSKI: To let women vote?

MR. CHIDLAW: Yes.

MS BETKOWSKI: Oh, good.

Secondly, I guess my observation would be: we've heard some cynicism about public life and people in public life, and I would like to encourage all of you to consider a partial career or taking a stint in public life. I think it's a very important cause, and we need young people like you in our political system in Canada. So thanks for all your work on this.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Pearl.

MS CALAHASEN: Each time Barrie gets this mike to his side, I also get called upon.

I, too, would like to say welcome and congratulations on the job you've done. Just one question. I was glad Nancy brought up the canton issue. You stated that "referendums are used in both national and provincial levels to vote on laws." One of the problems with referenda is the writer, whoever writes the questions. Who in your view would be able to write the

questions relative to any of the laws that are going to be asked people about to vote on these particular referenda?

MISS WALUGA: It would depend. In the provinces the people chosen by referendums to be in the Legislature would write up the laws and write up the questions. In the federal government . . . Maybe, Darren, you can help with this one.

MR. CHIDLAW: We have elected the people to represent us, so we might bring our questions to our representatives and ask them to bring them up in the Legislature.

MS CALAHASEN: That's basically talking about any issue you want people to be able vote on. So your representative would be the one to write the question to be sent out to everyone to vote on particular laws or particular issues.

MR. CHIDLAW: Bring it up in the Legislature and see what people think about that particular situation.

MS CALAHASEN: So you have the faith in the representative you voted in under this system, under another system.

MR. CHIDLAW: We believe our representatives will have to represent us, not be there for themselves. We don't believe in the party system either.

MS CALAHASEN: So basically you're saying no party system but rather on a canton basis, representing the people and using referenda to be able to determine what kinds of issues should be voted on and how those particular votes should take place. Representative government. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Barrie.

MR. CHIVERS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just pursuing Nancy's question a bit further with respect to the ability to move from province to province, mobility in terms of language rights. If, for example, Saskatchewan chose to adopt Mandarin as their official language, I suppose if Nancy wanted to move to Saskatchewan, it would be possible for her to learn Mandarin and she could participate in government on that basis. But more problematic, I guess: if one of the provinces - for example, Saskatchewan - decided that women didn't have the right to vote and Nancy wanted to participate in public life in Saskatchewan, she couldn't very well change her sex.

MR. CHIDLAW: No, but she could move to another province which does have the right to vote.

MR. CHIVERS: So that limits the range of possibilities for her. What does that do to the principle of equality that you spoke of earlier?

MISS WALUGA: We believe women voting and mobility rights, that people are able to move from province to province, things like that, should be in each constitution. There are language rights and several different things like the law. For example, the courts and the court system should be included in the government.

MR. CHIVERS: But you'd still leave each province the choice to make as to whether they include, for example, the right to vote.

MISS WALUGA: But things we believe in now that are democratic and sovereign, like the freedom to vote, should be in the constitutions of all the provinces.

MR. CHIVERS: But the difficulty is that it may not be, and it might be initially but they may decide to . . .

MISS WALUGA: But I'm sure all the people in Canada already believe in freedom for women to vote . . .

MR. CHIDLAW: Or the majority.

MISS WALUGA: . . . or the majority of the people, and we believe they would add that to their constitutions.

MR. CHIVERS: Okay. Let me change directions here a bit. I'm just wondering: you're both part of the same classroom, are you?

MISS WALUGA: Yes, we are.

MR. CHIVERS: You've got two substantially different models of government that you've outlined, the federal/provincial council system and then the Swiss canton system. You indicated to somebody else that you didn't agree with the other model, and I'm wondering whether you spent some time critiquing each other's model of government in your classroom and if you were able to defend amongst yourselves the relative merits of your models of government?

MR. CHIDLAW: No, we didn't.

MR. CHIVERS: Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Dennis.

7:43

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The concept of the canton model is a fascinating one, and we should be considering all possibilities without question.

What do you think we should do with all that authority which is currently there with the federal government? Do you think we should not have a Supreme Court, for example, when you say the laws should be provincial?

MISS KOROGONAS: We think that each province should have their own Supreme Court, and that would be the final court, the highest court in that province. There shouldn't really be a top court for the whole country, because each province would have their own Constitution so different rights would be applied to each province. So a Supreme Court for all the country would be kind of unfair.

MR. ANDERSON: So when you decide to go to university and you want to go to the University of Saskatchewan because they have a particular area you need to study, veterinary medicine maybe, and we have health care here in terms of paid health care and they don't there, would that still be okay or should there be some national standard in that respect?

MISS WALUGA: Well, I think each person would have to make their own choice.

MR. CHIDLAW: Of where they would want to go.

MISS WALUGA: Right; what is more important to them. They'd have to understand that Saskatchewan does not have a health care plan like that, and if going to Saskatchewan because they have a veterinary school there would be more important to them than having a medicare system, then that would be their choice. They'd have to understand that. Possibly the provinces, since they would be more sovereign, would build a school. I know that Alberta does not have a veterinary school, and possibly they would build it for the people in their province.

MR. ANDERSON: Well, you obviously very strongly believe in strong provinces. Whatever the beliefs, I think they're helpful to us. My congratulations, along with others, on the work you've done and to your class and to your instructors in assisting, which I assume they did, in encouraging you to do this. I wish we had many more, and I hope throughout the rest of the process we will.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Sheldon.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you very much. My congratulations to you, as well, on your initiative in coming before this committee. Might I inquire: what grades are you?

MISS KOROGONAS: Grade 10.

MR. CHUMIR: Grade 10? Okay.

I'd like to ask you about the question we were discussing with the previous group re your own sense of identification as to whether you feel yourselves to be primarily Canadians or Albertans.

MR. CHIDLAW: Well, personally I do say that I'm Canadian, but I feel that unless we have a Canada we can be proud of, we will start to refer to ourselves as Albertans or other things. [interjections] Harry Collinge high school goers; I don't know. Unless we can be proud of our country, we're not going to be saying that we are a part of that country and recognizing that as much as we would if we could be proud.

MISS WALUGA: That's right, because if we don't agree with what is happening in Quebec and what's happening with the unity and problems like this, we're not going to say we're Canadians, and the Quebecois are not going to say they are Canadians. So we need to recognize each culture for what it is and therefore that that will bind us together, that we respect each other's culture, respect each other's freedoms. As people with different nationalities, different cultures, that will bind us together, and therefore we'll be proud to be Canadians and proud to have that kind of system.

MR. CHUMIR: Do you all feel yourselves Canadians now?

MISS KOROGONAS: Well, we feel it, but we're not . . .

MR. CHIDLAW: We're losing it.

MISS KOROGONAS: Yeah, we're losing it.

MR. CHUMIR: You're losing it, and you're not proud because we're squabbling?

MISS KOROGONAS: We're not proud of our government because we feel the government cannot make decisions.

MR. CHIDLAW: Because they're not representing us.

MISS KOROGONAS: Yeah. It feels like they're not representing us. They're mostly representing their parties more than us. They cannot go against their parties, and we feel that this is disadvantaging us, you know.

MR. CHUMIR: But do you feel the country has lots of wonderful things about it, that it's a wonderful place to live in?

MISS KOROGONAS: Oh, yeah, it does.

MISS WALUGA: They just need to be brought out and encouraged.

MR. CHIDLAW: Altered.

MISS KOROGONAS: Right.

MR. CHUMIR: What about the Charter of Rights? Do you like having a Charter of Rights protecting our rights and freedoms?

MISS KOROGONAS: We do, yes, but . . .

MR. CHIDLAW: But we don't believe in all the things in the Charter.

MISS WALUGA: No, no. Yeah, we do believe in some of them.

MR. CHIDLAW: We do, but we don't. We do believe that we should have all our rights, but we don't like that the government can take things away.

MISS WALUGA: The notwithstanding clause.

MR. CHIDLAW: Yeah. The notwithstanding clause.

MR. CHUMIR: Okay. So you like the Charter. What about our medicare system?

MISS KOROGONAS: We like that.

MR. CHUMIR: You like that? Do you think that everybody across the country should have the same right to a minimum standard of medicare whether in Newfoundland or . . .

MISS KOROGONAS: We believe that, but our government should . . .

MISS WALUGA: Or governments, since we believe in cantons and separate governments. Because medicare is so expensive and it's part of the reason we're getting into debt, possibly we need to do something about that. We haven't talked about that, but some decision would need to be made.

MR. CHUMIR: Uh huh. But do you like the idea as a matter of principle that Canadians from one end of the country to the other will have some minimum standard, whatever that is?

MR. CHIDLAW: I think so, yeah.

MR. CHUMIR: Okay. What about education? Do you feel that there should be some common standards across the country?

MISS KOROGONAS: Yes, definitely. Right now we feel that some provinces have better schooling than other provinces, and they want to get into the better schools in the better provinces. That is disadvantaging the students that are living in that province, because it's harder to get into those universities that are becoming overcrowded.

MISS WALUGA: As Canadians, even though we'd have separate provinces, we believe we should still be learning the same things about Canada or we should be learning about the other provinces, maybe spend a year learning about our own province so we can get to know our Constitution, but overall get to know Canada and learn the same things that any other student in Newfoundland should learn to make it fair.

MR. CHUMIR: Super. Thank you very much.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: John.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are two areas I'd like to explore with you. One, in the previous presentation the students talked about political parties being a big part of the problem, that the party leaders tell people what to do. Is that a perception that you share as well?

MISS KOROGONAS: Yes.

MISS WALUGA: Yes, completely.

MR. CHIDLAW: Yes.

MR. McINNIS: This panel and our sister panel have been hearing a similar argument from people of all ages. I'm kind of curious about it, because if you take away political parties, then everybody is an individual, and if you're an individual dealing with the government system, unless you've got an awful lot of independent power, whether it's through wealth or from some private organization, you don't have very much clout. It seems to me that political parties are really a way that people get together and magnify their voice so they'll have some influence. I don't know. It occurs to me that the real issue is who controls the political parties, not whether you have them or you don't.

MISS WALUGA: But people will get together and express their views not through political parties; they'll express them through referendums. Therefore, if there's a majority – we wouldn't agree with maybe 34 percent and 40 percent – of people agreeing on, let's say, a new law, someone wrote up a new law federally, and 40 percent said that they would like this and another 25 percent said they wouldn't or something like this. There would have to be a majority, and people would get together through that. They would get together and directly express their views, not through political parties. You elect members to political parties, and then it's like the biggest minority. Therefore, people's views aren't expressed that way, because then the biggest minority wins and they make the decisions for the whole country.

MR. CHIDLAW: We elect you to be our representatives, not to represent the party. We didn't elect Joe Clark to represent the PCs, the Conservatives. We elected him to represent us.

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MISS KOROGONAS: Like, for example, the GST. We didn't want the GST, and Joe Clark couldn't go against his leader, so he had to agree with it.

MR. CHIDLAW: That's not fair.

MISS KOROGONAS: He wasn't representing us. He was representing his government, his party.

MISS WALUGA: He had no choice. If he went against, what could he do? He'd be kicked out, and that is completely unfair.

MR. McINNIS: Of course, at one time Joe was the leader, but I guess that's a whole other story.

It still begs the question of who decides who's going to be the government. You can have a referendum, but don't forget a referendum is always organized by a government. Somebody always decides what the question is going to be and, in some instances, on what information base the decision is made. You still have to have a government, and I guess what I want you to address is: if you don't have political parties – that is, groups of citizens who work together for a common cause or a common program – you have a bunch of individual politicians who are accountable . . .

MR. CHIDLAW: But they're there to support us, not to support their party. That's not what's happening now. They're supporting their party, not us.

MR. McINNIS: Yeah, I understand the concern. It's just how you devise an alternative.

MISS WALUGA: But the people would study, go to school, express their views, and then the people would hold referenda and vote these people into the federal government. I think we have five federal ministries.

MR. CHIDLAW: Yes.

MISS WALUGA: There would be five federal ministers, and they would decide. They would be directly picked by the people. They would know what the people wanted and would be able to agree themselves on several questions. If they did not agree, they could still ask in a national referendum if they wanted a law. They could still ask the question: do you want this law in? Then the people can decide. The federal government wouldn't be deciding, making the decisions; the people would.

MR. McINNIS: Fair enough.

If I could move just quickly to one other area. It's the area of the environment generally. You kids live in a town with a pulp mill. There's a lot of logging that takes place. I'm just wondering: are you satisfied that with the system the way it is, our provinces and the federal government are looking after the environment? Do you feel confident that we're going to give you a world that . . .

MISS WALUGA: No.

MR. CHIDLAW: No.

MISS KOROGONAS: No.

MR. McINNIS: Okay.

MISS KOROGONAS: Well, with the issue of the Inuit up north: they're saying that the Indians are killing off the beluga whales and they're becoming extinct. The government . . .

MR. CHIDLAW: It's the pollution.

MISS KOROGONAS: It is the pollution from all the factories, et cetera, but there are also other countries. The Japanese and the Germans are also killing the beluga whales, but the government is not willing to come in there and try to do something to save the beluga whales, clean up the pollution.

MISS WALUGA: The government doesn't put enough restrictions, as on the pulp mill. Like, we all know we're dying here and how many people working in the pulp mill have gotten cancer. The government is not putting enough restrictions on environmental issues, like our pulp mill.

MISS KOROGONAS: We say we do, but as citizens we see the government not doing as much as they possibly can.

MR. CHIDLAW: Not educating people enough on how to avoid creating damage.

MR. McINNIS: I'm familiar with the problem. What I'm wondering is if you've thought of something we should be doing differently in order to try to turn that problem around. I don't want to lead you in any direction.

MISS WALUGA: Possibly restricting how much pollution can be emitted, how many logging companies or pulp mills can be created, and things like that.

MR. CHIDLAW: And enforcing the laws we do have.

MISS WALUGA: Teaching people more, possibly in schools having a program, having a class.

MR. McINNIS: Do you think there might be a problem that the various provinces compete with each other for industries sometimes by lower environmental standards or lack of enforcement perhaps?

MR. CHIDLAW: Yeah.

MR. McINNIS: Would you go so far as to say maybe we should have national environmental standards for all of Canada?

MISS WALUGA: We never thought of that.

MR. CHIDLAW: Yeah. I think that would be a good idea: a national standard but then also have some provincial standards.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Stockwell.

MR. DAY: I had a question, but I'll just pursue this one a little further. What do you do with what you're suggesting about

provincial powers when, as is the case right now, the provincial standard may be higher than the federal standard?

MR. CHIDLAW: Then that's fine, but as long as it's not lower. If it's higher, there's no problem with that.

MR. DAY: Just on the Hinton question itself, my parents live in this area and raised my younger brothers and sisters here. I didn't live here myself. I wasn't aware, even visiting here a lot over the years, that there were higher cancer rates in Hinton than in the rest of Alberta. Are you aware of studies that . . .

MR. CHIDLAW: There may not be higher rates, but there is some linkage between cancer and some of the pollutants put out by the mill. People working in direct contact with . . .

MISS WALUGA: Per capita Hinton has a high cancer rate.

MR. DAY: Is that higher than other places in Alberta, do you know?

MISS WALUGA: Yes. I don't know what rate it is.

MR. DAY: Okay. I didn't know. I'll follow up on that.

You've got some interesting ideas, talking about individuals instead of parties and things like that. I'll try and be a little more open minded than some of my colleagues. I don't have an inherent fear of that, so that's something I think is worth exploring. I appreciate your bringing that idea out.

I'd like to ask: if you're talking about a cantonlike setup, is there a place then or a need for an elected Senate? Does that figure in your formula anywhere?

MISS KOROGONAS: No.

MISS WALUGA: Within the provinces.

MISS KOROGONAS: Oh, within the provinces. Not federally.

MR. DAY: An elected Senate within the provinces?

MR. CHIDLAW: Yes.

MR. DAY: I see.

MR. CHIDLAW: And we feel also that they should be expressing, because right now the Senate doesn't really do anything. They just sit there, make their bucks, and stamp the things. They hardly ever turn back any Bills.

MISS WALUGA: Because of the parties . . .

MISS KOROGONAS: The party in power is the one that elects the Senate. They make the laws, and therefore the Senate of course will pass the laws.

MR. DAY: Yeah, I agree.

Just one comment, Mr. Chairman. You've made a painful admission here tonight in terms of at times not being that proud of the Canadian government and therefore of the country, but with that I sense some optimism. I sense that you're not throwing up your hands and walking away, but you're saying, "Here are some ideas to improve the system," even though you feel painful about parts of it. So I commend you for that.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Just before we conclude, I would also like to express my gratitude and appreciation and congratulations for your efforts. Six of you are here this evening. Could you tell me, though: does this represent the work of the six of you, or were other members of the class involved?

MR. CHIDLAW: Just the six of us.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Well, I think that is very, very good.

I guess I just can't leave without a question about the Charter of Rights in our country, which is now approaching 10 years old. Of course you don't remember too much pre-Charter. Therefore I can't ask you whether you feel a lot more free than you did 10 years ago. The big argument about the Charter is that appointed judges then tend to start making the laws instead of the elected people. They use that Charter as a method of doing that. Do you think that is a good idea, or do you think the laws of the province or the canton or the country should be made by the elected people and interpreted by the judges?

MISS WALUGA: I think the laws should be made by the people and therefore . . .

MR. CHIDLAW: Enforced.

MISS WALUGA: . . . enforced, so the judges would act on what the people wanted, on what the people believed in each province.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Again, congratulations on your efforts and your appearance before us this evening.

Members of the committee, we have one more presentation before we conclude. The Chair would invite Craig Babcock to come forward. We will try to deal as expeditiously as possible with this, but we welcome you, Craig.

MR. BABCOCK: I won't take much of your time.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We're happy you're here.

MR. BABCOCK: I didn't come here tonight with the intent of making a presentation, but after listening to the other ones, I thought I could maybe just take a couple of minutes.

&03

One comment I'd like to make is that the government in Canada has been around for 124 years, and it's worked up till now. It's had its rough spots and everything, but I don't think that we have to completely restructure this government; I think we have to refine it a little bit. If you draw a likeness to computers, when computers first came out, everything was on a mainframe and people reported to it, and now people are networking, giving more power to individuals. I think you can maybe draw some kind of likeness there.

On official bilingualism, I think that will work, and I think it will institute itself if it's given enough time. But Canadians have to be more tolerant, English-speaking Canadians as well as French-speaking Canadians.

On multiculturalism, I think that while Canada definitely is a multicultural country, we tend to push that too much. An example of that: I'm from Edson, and on town council there we

can get more grant money for a heritage festival than we can for Canada Day. To me that doesn't make much sense. I've got a bit of a problem with that.

I'd like to see the provincial governments get more power in some areas; in some I'd like to see it stay the same or even diminish. I think the federal government has to look after external affairs, defence, and welfare as well as set minimum standards for the environment.

Native rights, I believe, should be entrenched in the Constitution, but self-government for the native community I really don't think will work, as much as I would like to think it would. I think there would be too much problem with transfer payments, administering social programs, and stuff like that with a separate . . . It would be like Italy trying to run the Vatican, I think.

Senate reform: I think the triple E Senate is maybe one way to go. The Charter of Rights: I think, like you said, with the 10 years it's still going through growing pains and has to have some modification.

One statement that one of the previous presenters made, that political parties are controlled by the leader, I really, really disagree with, because I think the leader is controlled by the caucus and the caucus is controlled by the MLAs or the MPs, or theoretically should be. You control your MP, and if he's not doing the job, then basically it's your own fault.

Anyway, I think Canada's not in as bad a shape as we tend to think it is.

That's about it.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It's nice to conclude on an upbeat presentation. Which members would like to . . .

While you're gathering your thoughts, I appreciate what you say about the representative role of the member, but I think there's not a good understanding as to how the caucus system works at the federal level. I would agree with you that it is not working very well, and there's lots of room for improvement there.

Sheldon.

MR. CHUMIR: You can let John go. I've already deferred.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Oh, sorry. John first.

MR. McINNIS: Craig, I just want to ask you about the comment about the amount of activity and the amount of money that is available for multicultural celebrations as compared with Canada Day celebrations. Does that affect the town council at all? Are you involved with cultural groups, and do you sponsor a Canada Day program? I'm just wondering how the money works from your end of things.

MR. BABCOCK: We sponsor both, but this year, because of lack of turnout for the heritage festival, we decided to drop it for this year because of the turnout and the time and effort that went into it. We also sponsor or help with the Canada Day celebrations in town, and we receive funding through the provincial and federal governments, I think, for that. But I know it is less, because we had quite a bit of a problem at the subcommittee level meeting on this.

MR. McINNIS: So you found that there was more funding available for the multicultural event than there was for the Canada Day event?

MR. BABCOCK: Definitely. Yes, there is. It's given out on a per capita basis.

MR. McINNIS: Now, I'm assuming that the Canada Day funding comes from the federal government. Does the multicultural funding come from the province, the federal government, or both?

MR. BABCOCK: It comes from the province, I believe.

MR. McINNIS: The province. Hmm, that's interesting. That's my question.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Sheldon.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you very much, Craig. I appreciate your presentation. I believe you indicated that you thought the federal government should have less power in some areas and more in others: kind of a mix, a rebalancing. What about medicare? Under the current system the federal government sets some standards and principles, provides the money, and all the operations are then carried out by the provincial government; they make the detailed decisions. Do you think the federal government should have that power over medicare so that there's a consistent standard from one end of the country to the other, or should that be provincial?

MR. BABCOCK: I would like to see, and I really think it could work, medicare come under provincial guidelines or be provincially controlled. To me it doesn't make a whole lot of sense to collect money, send it to one person and have them send it back. If people in a certain province were willing to pay more or weren't willing to pay as much, then you could more or less make your own bed, I guess. If you wanted better health care, you could pay for it, and if you didn't want to, you could not pay for it and pay for it out of your own pocket rather than universal health care. I mean, universal health care is a great thing, but I think the time has come that Canadians are going to have to start paying for more of it on an individual and a user-pay basis. You know, it's getting to that point where it's getting to be expensive. It's prohibitive, cost prohibitive now, and it's going to get worse.

MR. CHUMIR: Do you think there should be a minimum standard for Canadians from one end of the country to the other, whether you're in Newfoundland or the maritimes or Alberta, or is that not a value that is . . .

MR. BABCOCK: I really don't think you need to. I think if a person lives in Alberta, where there's a certain standard of health care, and he goes to Newfoundland and gets hurt, then I don't see why it couldn't work the same as now, where if I get hurt outside my province, my provincial health care looks after my bills. By the same token, if I lived in Newfoundland and didn't have as good health care and came to Alberta and got hurt, I don't feel that it's fair that Albertans and everybody else would have to pay for my health care. I mean, if I'm not willing to pay the premiums for it, then I have to pay it out of my own pocket when something happens to me.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Barrie.

MR. CHIVERS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Craig, I just wanted to pursue briefly your comment with respect to the Charter. Your general attitude, if I understood what you were saying, was that it needs some fine-tuning too. I'm just wondering what areas you were thinking of. Are you thinking in terms of adding or subtracting, or what precisely was it that you were thinking of?

MR. BABCOCK: Well, maybe along with what Mr. Schumacher said about the judges making the laws and people in a lot of instances hiding behind the Charter and using it maybe in ways that it shouldn't be used: that people are allowed to do things or don't have to do things because they're protected by the Charter of Rights. Maybe it has too much power in some areas and, again, turns power over to the judge, where he decides on what the Charter says and it's not clear-cut.

MR. CHIVERS: But that's the nature of all laws as long as we're going to have a judicial system that's interpreting the laws. The difference with constitutional laws, of course, is that they're more difficult to change.

MR. BABCOCK: Yeah, I guess so.

MR. CHIVERS: Is there a specific right or freedom that you see entrenched in the Charter of Rights, for example, that you'd like to see removed?

MR. BABCOCK: No. As far as the specifics of the whole thing, I was just making the general comment that I think the Charter of Rights is good, but it may need some fine-tuning. As far as specifics, I really couldn't comment.

MR. CHIVERS: Thanks very much, Craig. I appreciate your coming out this evening, particularly on short notice.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Well, if there's nothing else, thank you.

Oh, sorry. I've forgotten Stock.

MR. DAY: Thanks, Craig. Just a quick question here. You mentioned, as far as official bilingualism, that it will work given time, and I'd like to pursue that a little. The Official Languages Act came about in the early '60s, almost 30 . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: In 1969.

MR. DAY: The Official Languages Act?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: May of 1969. I voted against it.

MR. DAY: Late '60s, and of course closely followed by the official policy on bilingualism, so we're looking at 20 years. The sense we have is that more people are upset about it than not upset. There seems to be an increasing amount of irritation to do with that people don't see the reason for the fullness of it being implemented in Alberta, where languages other than French follow English in terms of numbers. Of course, they don't see it being implemented at all in Quebec. What's your sense that it will improve, Craig? Is it going to need some intervention, or should it be phased out?

MR. BABCOCK: Well, my comment was that bilingualism will work. I don't know that the Act itself that we have in place will work.

MR. DAY: I see. Okay.

MR. BABCOCK: I think something like that almost administers itself over time. If there's a demand for French in Falher, you're going to have a French school. If there's no demand for French in Jasper, you're not going to have a French school in Jasper.

MR. DAY: I appreciate the difference you're making between becoming bilingual or forcing . . . Thanks for pointing that out. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Again, thank you very much for your presentation, Craig. The committee wishes to thank everybody who appeared before it today and to say that we believe the citizens of West Yellowhead have been most helpful to us. Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 8:13 p.m.]