

9 a.m.

Friday, May 31, 1991

[Chairman: Mr. Horsman]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to get the meeting under way if I could. I'd like to welcome you all here this morning and also, as the MLA for Medicine Hat, welcome my colleagues to my constituency. This is one of the panels of the Alberta Select Special Committee on Constitutional Reform, which has been conducting hearings during the course of the past week throughout the province. The other panel is conducting hearings today in Edmonton, and they'll conclude in Edmonton tomorrow night. This panel will go on to Calgary this evening and conduct some further public hearings this evening and all day tomorrow, and that will conclude the process which we have established to date.

This particular panel has had almost 140 submissions from interested Albertans, individuals or groups, in the days we've had, and of course, today and all day tomorrow we expect that we will hear from a good number of other participants. We've been hearing a very interesting set of presentations. As you might expect, opinions vary widely, but in all I think it's fair to say we've been hearing from a lot of people who really want to see this country of ours succeed, and that's been encouraging to all members of the panel.

I think most of you know who I am, the MLA for Medicine Hat and chairman of this select committee. I'd like now to have my colleagues introduce themselves briefly.

MRS. GAGNON: I'm Yolande Gagnon, and I represent Calgary-McKnight.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Bob Hawkesworth, MLA for Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. ADY: Jack Ady, MLA for Cardston.

MR. SEVERTSON: Gary Severtson, MLA for Innisfail.

MR. BRADLEY: Fred Bradley, MLA for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest.

MS BARRETT: Pam Barrett, Edmonton-Highlands.

MR. ROSTAD: Ken Rostad, Camrose.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'd like to welcome in the audience today our colleague Shirley McClellan, the MLA for Chinook and the Associate Minister of Agriculture, who has joined us for the morning, and also to acknowledge in the audience His Worship Mayor Ted Grimm, who is going to observe and listen to the representations that are being made today.

There is a bell which will ring at the end of 10 minutes to alert the presenters that 10 minutes have expired. Another bell will ring at the end of five minutes, and that is the signal to bring the presentation and the questioning to a conclusion. We try to keep within that limit in order to make sure that everyone who wishes to make a presentation may do so. At the end of the morning we have an unscheduled period for anyone in the audience who wishes to come forward and just give us their views, either from any of their written materials or just verbally, and we'll be pleased to hear from people in that respect as well.

I'd like to then ask Dr. Wilson and Dr. Storlien on behalf of the Medicine Hat school district No. 76 to come forward and make their presentation.

DR. WILSON: Mr. Horsman, ladies and gentlemen, we are very pleased to be able to make this presentation on behalf of the public school district No. 76. The school district was founded in 1886, so it's an old institution in this community and, we think, still speaks on behalf of the children and parents of the community in regards to educational issues. We have outlined for you in this brief five points that we feel we would like to make at this time. The board has looked at these. We revised these at our last meeting. Unfortunately, the media reported on the draft, and this is quite a different version. If you've seen some of the media accounts of the report, you'll see that we have since changed some things. The headline, I think, was not exactly what we wanted it to be, but anyway you can't control that sort of thing.

What we're saying in this draft, ladies and gentlemen, is that in this district we believe that education should remain a public function, as it has been, of course, in this community for over 100 years, and we support the emphasis on public education and the continued support of public education, rather than other forms of education, privatized education or whatever you want to call it. That has worked very well here, and we continue to support publicly funded education.

Secondly, we are very much in favour of the existing constitutional practice by which education is the primary responsibility of the province, but it is something which has been in our particular province shared with locally elected jurisdictions. We like that arrangement. It has worked really well for us. Every so often there are little kinks along the way, but generally speaking, it has worked so well that we would continue to support that particular arrangement in all of the categories possible. There is one small exception to that, which we'll make later, which sometimes occurs. But generally speaking, that is our position, the continued support of the present constitutional arrangement.

Thirdly, we as a board support the emphasis on national standards. We support the initiative and the concerns of the Prime Minister in regards to the standards of education. We support the work that is being done presently among some of the provinces in regards to creating national standards, but along with that we are always very conscious that of course the control of education must remain where it has constitutionally been fixed from the beginning, and that is with the provinces. We would prefer this to be and continue to be a collaborative effort, as generally it has been over the past, rather than the imposition of sort of a national set of standards. We would like to also make mention – and this is one of the changes in our brief – that we support the idea of being conscious, of course, of international standards so that we remain, as we are, competitive in our educational system on the world scene.

Number four, our board very much believes in the concept of a Canadianized curriculum. This has been something which has improved even in the last few years in our own province. We see evidence of this, of course, in elementary social studies and in other areas. We would like this to continue. We think it's really important that our young people grow up learning about this country, learning to love this country through the school. For generations that has been the way that people have learned to love their country. I think we have to continue that, and that is really a strong position of this particular board. But once

again we underline our consistent belief throughout this paper that this still must be done in a provincial way. So we hope that the kind of collaboration that is being established now in setting up national standards can be used when it comes to the curriculum issue so that there's good work done in the provinces and by the provinces, yet towards the goal of Canadianization.

Fifthly, in a sense a little exception to our strong stand on provincial control, and that is the necessity in some cases of federal involvement and federal funding. In our own district we've had examples of the need for additional support; especially recently, for example, English as a Second Language. Perhaps in some communities it would be French as a first language for the children who are of course the immigrant children. We've had examples of that over the last few years, the necessity to provide these children with English services and the extreme costs of those because of the small numbers. We feel that although we would prefer that to be completely a provincial responsibility, that isn't always the case. Because of the tremendous costs associated with, for example, ESL programs – and in some cases, as you can see, we've listed others in the past and present, current initiatives in regards to stay-in-school programs and what have you – we will have to accept federal support, federal funding in order to make those programs work properly. We just cannot afford in this community to support all the various programs that sometimes come our way that we don't have a lot of control over. We do like the idea of continued provincial control, but we have to admit that it's very nice to have the federal funding on those programs which we find very expensive to manage in our own school district.

9:10

As we discussed the possibility of saying a few things to your committee, I think the bottom line was – and, you know, we are busy people, and sometimes you say should we do it? – I think, as we say in our concluding statement, that the public school board is very concerned about the current constitutional question in this country. We thought it was worth our while to come here and give you our support and our best wishes as you go forward now in preparing your report, and make several points that we feel speak on behalf of the community that, of course, are the public school ratepayers in Medicine Hat.

I'll conclude. Those are just sort of highlighting some of the key points we made, and there may be one or two points that you wish to develop further with us. Thank you, Mr. Horsman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Roy.
Yes, Yolande.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you. Maybe to the superintendent: is it your belief that in addition to the need to Canadianize our curriculum, we don't have enough history? We've melded history, geography, and current events into social studies. Do you think we need to re-emphasize history? It seems to me that one of the things I've noticed as we traveled this week is that a lot of people don't know our story as Canadians. They don't know the story about the west and so on. Should we re-emphasize it and make it stronger?

DR. STORLIEN: I would tend to agree with you on that point. You know the old saying that we're doomed to repeat the mistakes of the past if we don't know what they were. For sure, it would be an important element to re-emphasize that part. Dr. Wilson, as a former social studies teacher, would probably be feeling that also there.

Again, it's a difficult balance. It's the same thing in the work that you do, the balance that needs to be established between studying the current issues and also putting them in the context of history. There has to be that balance, and we struggle between that to establish that balance. We will continue to do that. It's very necessary here, I think, that each one of our students understands the Canadian perspective that they are a citizen of, and I would concur.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If I could just for a moment. One of the statements you have in your concluding statement, which you didn't read but I think it should go on the record, is:

In our education systems, just as in the larger context of our total Canadian society, we must start focusing our attention on our commonalities and our strengths as Canadians, not our diversity and our weaknesses. We seem to concentrate our energies on issues that drive us apart rather than pull us together.

Constitutional reform must be a positive force that results in strength and unity for Canada.

I thought that was very, very well worded and succinctly puts the feelings, I think, of many people we've been hearing from in the last few days as we've gone across the province.

One question, though, I did want to pose to you is the subject of language instruction. That has come before us in a variety of ways. I wondered if the board has taken a position on the question of language instruction in French and English and other languages.

DR. WILSON: Mr. Horsman and committee, I don't know if you've heard some of the reports on the radio stations and in the newspaper about some discussion we had of this. I think it may have been a bit misrepresented. Language instruction in both official languages in this community as well as in the German language, which we offer to our children from junior high upwards, is a priority and is one of the goals in our education plan. Not only do we offer, naturally, English instruction in this community, but we offer a core French-language program from grades 4 to 12 to all of our children, and we offer a core German program in our community for all children that wish to take it from grade 7. That is not compulsory, of course, nor is the core French after junior high. The core German takes place from junior high forward. Then we've had for I think five years, if I'm correct . . .

DR. STORLIEN: Six years.

DR. WILSON: . . . six years a French immersion program in this community which is functioning very well, with a lot of parent support for the parents who wish their children to also be exposed and learn the second official language.

I would say, generally speaking, that the board of this school district has been supportive of, open to, and interested in the development of language programs where the public has seen the need and where they've expressed a desire for that. German and French at the moment and English are the three languages we concentrate on. There hasn't been an expressed interest, supposedly, in other languages at the moment. If there was, we would look at that as well. Our goals, Mr. Horsman, in our new education plan very strongly stress the place of language.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Any other questions from my colleagues on the panel? I have a couple more, and I didn't want to pre-empt them from asking any questions themselves.

Okay. The section 23 issue is one which is facing our government today; that is to say, the constitutional requirement for instruction in minority languages where numbers warrant. In your view will that likely become an issue or concern to the people of this region?

DR. WILSON: That was one of the points we had addressed in our first draft. The bottom line we had made at that time on the question of where numbers warrant was that we would prefer it to remain a question of provincial responsibility rather than, say, in some other jurisdiction. We haven't had discussions of that because we haven't really determined what children might, you know, fall under Charter provisions here. There hasn't been, that I'm aware of, a strong need for that at this moment. As a board we haven't addressed it.

I'll ask Dr. Storlien if perhaps as an administrator it's come to his attention, because I think that would be appropriate.

DR. STORLIEN: We haven't had any official requests from parents to even start to look at how many numbers we do have in this area, not only in the community but, say, in southeastern Alberta. We will be collecting that information over time as we register new students, but it does not appear to be an issue here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Well, thank you very much for your comments. I think you've given us a very clear indication of the point of view of the Medicine Hat public school board.

Oh, one other question; sorry. The federal throne speech made reference to the fact that Canadians are under great stress relative to their literacy. The figure was used of four out of 10 Canadians being functionally illiterate. Is it your experience from the school systems here and the product that you turn out, so to speak, that that figure would apply in this region?

DR. STORLIEN: You know, I haven't put all of our graduates or people who would leave our school system through that same type of testing, but they go through the achievement tests that Alberta Education puts out. Still, the majority of the students – and we have a higher rate than 70 percent. It lies in the 80 to 90 area, depending from year to year, that graduate from high school. They pass their English 30 and English 33 finals. We are very, very happy about the literacy rate as they leave our school system. There's always room for improvement, and we're not saying that we've got that at the level that we want it. It would be certain that we would like to have a hundred percent, which we don't have, but we don't share those same concerns that are felt across Canada. We don't think that we're burying our head in the sand as we are looking at that either.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for those comments and that information. Thank you, gentlemen.

Dr. Fred Speckeen.

9:20

DR. SPECKEEN: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for putting me on your agenda so early. I have a plane to catch. You have a copy of my presentation before you. I'm going to move through it very quickly and highlight it.

First of all, though, as president of Medicine Hat College I would like to welcome the select committee to our campus. You're more than welcome here. We're happy to have you here. Throughout the day if there's anything you need, I know that our staff would be most willing and able to assist you, so

don't hesitate to call on us for anything you'd like. I'm going to move through very, very quickly, as I've indicated.

The purpose of my presentation, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, is to speak about the responsibility for educational standards in light of the recent federal initiative on education and keeping in mind provincial and federal responsibilities. In 1987 George Radwanski, the former editor of the *Toronto Star*, was requested by the Ontario Liberal government to prepare a report on student dropouts in that province. A quotation from Mr. Radwanski is appropriate as we consider the topic of standards. I will quote him with the following words:

There can be no meaningful pursuit of educational outcomes, no effective remediation to keep students from accumulating crippling deficits of knowledge and skills, and no real accountability within our system of education, until clearly defined learning objectives are established for every stage of the process.

Radwanski's call for accountability, learning objectives, measurable outcomes, and standards fell on deaf ears. Ontario was determined to follow the easier path of allowing students to more or less do their own thing. They were allowed maximum freedom of choice, opportunities to discover themselves, and to move up the educational ladder even if they were unprepared for the academic demands which awaited them.

Today these approaches have less popularity, although there is some strong evidence that they still exist. There is renewed interest in our educational systems as we wrestle with competitors, some of whom used to be Third World nations, with highly trained and skilled work forces. As a result, we are severely questioning the nature of our educational systems: what is taught to students, what is demanded of students, what are the qualifications of our educators, and just what are the standards or measurable objectives?

With its usual propensity to move into areas where angels fear to tread, our federal government has announced its intention to cut illiteracy rates, reduce the number of high school dropouts, double the number of college and university students in the sciences, and dramatically increase training programs by employers fourfold. In a paper entitled *To Live and To Learn*, a paper not yet released, the federal government calls for a reform of our educational systems. It claims that such a reform is beyond partisan politics and intergovernmental sensitivities. While the federal government's concern that goals should be established for students is laudable, the proposed goal of reforming the provincial systems without provincial protestations is not achievable. Regardless of federal reassurances that there is really nothing to worry about, some provinces have already told the federal government to butt out and to reread the *British North America Act*.

Against this background of the federal initiative I would like to highlight certain educational issues of which you are probably aware, and I'm going to just highlight these very, very quickly. First of all, as you know – at least I think – the two major challenges to this country are focused on competition and productivity, particularly from other countries. As a member of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges Task Force on Science and Technology and as the founding chairman of the Canadian Alliance for Productivity Improvement, I am reminded almost on a daily basis of the threats we face from other countries. As an industrialized nation – and I'm sure you know this – we lag far behind other such nations in our investment in research and development. Organizations such as the Canadian Manufacturers' Association indicate that of the seven highest industrialized nations Canada ranks number six in its investment in research and development. Our educational system, when

held up to scrutiny, reveals that some 30 percent of our students do not complete grade 12 and that we have one of the highest dropout rates of any industrialized country. Studies such as that carried out recently by Southam Press reveal that 25 percent of Canadians are functionally illiterate on tests involving language and 'numeracy.'

New standards of excellence are demanded. Flexibility and training programs are required. The call is for persons with a new awareness of science, technology, and the humanities. There is also renewed emphasis on definite program objectives rather than on program length, on training flexibility, and on total quality; that is, a dedication to continuous improvement, customer focus, evaluation, waste reduction, and environmental awareness. This concept calls for excellence; flexible approaches to production and process; the appropriate mix of knowledge and skills; an emphasis on people, coworkers, and customers; continuous improvement; ingenuity; analytical skills; decision-making abilities; and the generation and unlocking of new ideas. As nations around the world wrestle with their sense of destiny, they invariably come back to education as one of the leading factors if not the most important factor which will affect a nation's future. You need only look to recent statements by the President of the United States, the President of France, and the Prime Minister of Canada for evidence of this fact.

In looking at education, the federal government is making this, as I see it, a people matter rather than a matter of jurisdiction. The same kind of argument was used by the federal government when it initiated the Canadian job strategies a few years ago. Although the federal government should be applauded for its interest in national standards for education, health care, and the social services, its involvement must be carefully scrutinized to make certain that it does not infringe on provincial jurisdiction. In his statements Employment and Immigration minister Bernard Valcourt downplays these constitutional questions, and the health minister, Benoît Bouchard, assures us that the provinces will not be forced to become involved with Ottawa's learning initiative. These statements have a somewhat hollow ring based on previous federal exhibitions of interests in education. The reduction in transfer payments alone should be enough to cause the provinces to take a careful look at the federal initiative before buying in. There are other questions which could be raised when it comes to federal involvement in education, such as the federal government's commitment on a long-term basis to funding. A case in point would be the Canadian job strategy program, with a particular relationship to English as a Second Language training, where the dollars are not only in short supply but are not provided on a long-term basis.

The interest of the federal government in educational standards, as I said, is laudable. However, the responsibility for establishing standards and measuring success in meeting them should remain the responsibility of the provinces. The logical way to establish and implement standards and to determine how well they are being met is through the interprovincial Council of Ministers of Education. It is my opinion that this council does not have an illustrious track record. However, it was on the right track in recently calling for a national testing program. It is to be hoped that the federal call for national standards in education will not be lightly shrugged off by the provinces with a dog-in-the-manger attitude, especially at a time when Canada's economy is being challenged by countries which place a high premium on high standards. Furthermore, it is to be hoped that the federal government will not again plough into provincial territories without consultation, discussion, co-operation, and with an absence of threats.

I believe our provinces have educational standards, that they continually monitor them, and that they covet high standards. I also believe they appreciate federal support as they implement changes in those standards. In the case of Alberta I believe insistence that the federal government work through the Council of Ministers of Education is not only reasonable but fully recognizes the legislative authority of the provinces for educational standards.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Dr. Speckeen. Questions or comments from members of the panel?

Yes, Bob Hawkesworth.

9:30

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Dr. Speckeen. It's now the second presentation we've heard this morning suggesting that the provinces and the federal government, I guess, more or less live with the status quo. Certainly, as someone who's a product of Alberta's educational system, I'd like to think that Alberta does have a very, very high standard for education in Canada.

Let me just sort of play a little bit of a devil's advocate with you and ask you for your reaction. How do we ensure in Canada that a good quality education is almost a right of citizenship, so that a child growing up in, say, rural Nova Scotia or rural New Brunswick or Manitoba has more or less the same educational opportunities as a child growing up in Medicine Hat or Calgary, so there's not a penalty because they happen to be in a poorer province that doesn't have the resources to commit to education that a relatively wealthy province like Alberta might have? Maybe that's not a problem now, but do you see it possibly being a problem? Is there any role that a federal government could conceivably play in helping to create a more level playing field for educational opportunity across the country?

DR. SPECKEEN: That's a valid question, Bob. First of all, I wasn't suggesting that the status quo be maintained, other than I was emphasizing what I think is a provincial responsibility when it comes to education. I think there are many ways of co-operating with the federal government in meeting some of the needs that you've identified, but that's a two-way street. My concern is for the federal government to become involved in something that it shouldn't become involved with, in the first instance, and secondly, based on its track record, it has not done a very good job when it has become involved. The CJS program was one where it was simply implemented and then forced on the provinces with the argument that the federal government was concerned about the employment of its citizens. That's certainly a valid position, but the approach I questioned even then, and I still question it as a result of the track record of that program.

What you're pointing out is certainly a concern that those of us in education have. I'm just as concerned about, shall I say, the disenfranchised young people and adults these days in the province of Alberta as I am about my fellow citizens in Nova Scotia. What I'm suggesting is that these needs can easily be identified by the federal government. It has the ability to do that in co-operation with the provinces, and I'm suggesting that those needs can be met on a co-operative basis. The transfer payments alone raise some questions, with the federal government cutting back on transfer payments which are designed for educational purposes, and that's going to place the students you're thinking of in Nova Scotia perhaps in a more difficult position.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Good point. Thank you.

MRS. GAGNON: I have a very, very short question. What about free trade in education, the portability of certificates, of degrees, and so on? It seems now that when you go from province to province, you're always penalized. Your courses are not all recognized, and so on.

DR. SPECKEEN: Well, Yolande, another good question. We have the same problem within the provinces.

MRS. GAGNON: I know. From one institution to the other.

DR. SPECKEEN: One of my concerns in terms of our community colleges is that we must meet the requirements of four universities in this province. My feeling is that there should be some method, and we're working on this. For example, the business programs we offer should probably be the same in all the colleges, with some electives, let's say. But why do we have to meet the requirements of four universities which among themselves can't agree on what admission requirements should be? Portability of credits, to me, is a laudable goal. Here again I think it can be done through the council of ministers. That's what the council of ministers is for. They should be mandated by their particular provincial governments to get on with it and deal with those kinds of questions and problems. It is very difficult to transfer across the country as well as within the province.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good point, Fred. You and I have had a number of discussions on that particular concern. It kind of hits home here in Medicine Hat, the issue of being able to take your course of study to the University of Alberta and being told almost inevitably, "Oops, you have to take an extra course." It's most frustrating.

Well, thank you, Fred. You have a plane to catch.

DR. SPECKEEN: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome again.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for acting as our hosts on this campus here.

DR. SPECKEEN: Happy to do it. In fact, we're happy to have you here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

Paul Houlston and four students from école River Heights, I understand. We can bring some more chairs up, I think, for you.

MR. HOULSTON: There are two separate presentations.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Two separate presentations. Okay. We have Jessica Suidan and Lia Wagner.

MISS SUIDAN: We have three people in our group: Jessica Suidan, Lia Wagner, and Nicole Baumbach, but unfortunately she couldn't be here today.

Our report will discuss the constitutional problem of how our taxes should be divided to support social services. Our report will discuss social policy in Canada and Alberta. We will discuss our opinions on how our taxes should be divided to support

social services. The social services in Canada and Alberta include things such as health care, welfare, education, and Canadian military services. We feel that a large percentage of our taxes should go towards Alberta health care. It is important that our society be a healthy one and not neglecting health care. We also feel that our seniors deserve a program that covers all health care instead of just a portion. Some seniors may not be able to afford coverage otherwise. We think that half of the health care for young adults and children should be covered by Alberta health care.

MISS WAGNER: Alberta has provided a welfare service, meaning government money used for people in need of money. We feel that some people may be taking advantage of this money paid through our society's taxes. We also feel that this is very unfair to the taxpayers. Money may be used for such things as alcohol, cigarettes, drugs, and unnecessary clothing.

To solve this problem, we think the welfare department should require anyone on welfare to obtain a job. This will partially tell the government that the people aren't spending their time wasting taxpayers' money. If he or she has young children and is required to work, maybe the welfare department could supply some sort of day care to watch the children while the mother or father works.

MISS SUIDAN: We think taxes towards education are beneficial. We think this because the more educated a society is, the better the society is. This will benefit Canada tremendously.

MISS WAGNER: We don't feel that a lot of our taxes should go towards military needs, our reason being that it is not very often that we need the military. We don't want to seem like we are relying on the U.S., but we just don't feel that it is as necessary as health care and education.

MISS SUIDAN: We seriously hope that some of our ideas are taken into consideration.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, girls. Now, a couple more of your classmates are coming forward too? Thank you very much.

Does anybody want to ask one of these girls a question before they leave?

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Could I just ask, because you, Mr. Chairman, asked a little earlier about language education: are you in a French immersion program?

MISS SUIDAN: No, we are in the English, but the other two are in the French immersion.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Okay.

MRS. GAGNON: What grade are you in?

MISS SUIDAN: Six.

MISS WAGNER: Same.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks very much.

We have Mark Samcoe and Matt Whitson. Bienvenue et bonjour.

MR. SAMCOE: Mr. Chairman and members of the task force, Matthew and I have prepared this report as part of our work for grade 6 social studies. We are studying the levels of government in Canada. I'll give the report in English and the exact same thing in French.

Who should have control over the education system? The education system is very important, and we should try to improve it. Should the federal or the provincial government be in charge of the system, or should it be a joint arrangement? At the present time the provincial government is in charge of most things. In some areas this arrangement works well. All the provinces have different social studies programs that focus on the history of the province. That is fair. But why do all the provinces have different math programs?

Instead, there could be one official system. In certain areas it might be better if the federal government regulated some subjects like math, health, English, science, and core French. On the other hand, for social studies and special programs it would be better for the provinces to have complete control. In B.C., for example, the provinces might decide to teach about the west coast Indians or offer marine biology and Japanese immersion because of their trade links. In Alberta they might decide to teach agricultural science and offer a course about the plains Indians. In this way, the basic areas of education would have the same standards in all the provinces.

I think the federal government should support student exchanges between provinces so we can learn about each other. In this way, we could understand better. The natives say we don't understand them, the west says the east doesn't understand them, and so does Quebec. The sad fact is that it is true. We have to educate ourselves about each other.

9:40

In conclusion, I think that there should be a joint control over the education system so we can better understand each other and have a better Canada.

Le système d'éducation est très important et nous devons essayer de l'améliorer. Est-ce que le gouvernement fédéral ou provincial devrait être en charge du système, ou est-ce que cela devrait être un arrangement conjoint?

Jusqu'à présent, le gouvernement provincial est en charge de presque toutes les choses. Dans quelques sujets cela marche très bien. Toutes les provinces ont des programmes différents d'études sociales qui se spécialisent dans l'histoire de la province. Ça c'est d'accord, mais pourquoi est-ce que les provinces ont des programmes différents de mathématiques? De cette façon, les cours d'éducation seront du même niveau dans toutes les provinces.

Je pense que le gouvernement fédéral doit supporter les échanges d'étudiants entre les provinces pour que nous apprenions plus à propos de nous-mêmes. Cela va nous aider à plus nous comprendre. Les Indiens disent que nous ne les comprenons pas. L'Ouest dit que l'Est ne le comprend pas. C'est la même chose avec le Québec. Tout cela c'est vrai. On doit s'orienter un peu plus à propos de notre pays tout de même.

Peut-être que cela serait mieux si le gouvernement fédéral avait du pouvoir sur les sujets comme les mathématiques, l'hygiène, l'anglais, les sciences, et le français langue seconde. De l'autre côté pour les études sociales, cela marcherait mieux si le gouvernement provincial avait plus de pouvoir ou même le pouvoir complet. Dans la Colombie-Britannique, par exemple, cette province enseigne à propos des Indiens de la côte Ouest, ou la province offre la biologie marine et l'immersion japonaise,

car ce sont des chaînes d'échanges. Dans l'Alberta peut-être qu'il faut enseigner à propos des sciences de l'agriculture et un cours sur les Indiens des Plaines.

Pour terminer, je pense qu'il devrait y avoir un contrôle conjoint sur le système d'éducation, pour que nous puissions nous comprendre afin d'avoir un meilleur Canada.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Merci beaucoup.

Mr. Whitson, do you wish to add something?

MR. WHITSON: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have a joint presentation and one spokesman then. Thank you.

Any questions for our presenters from members of the panel? Pam Barrett.

MS BARRETT: Thank you. That's very good. My question relates to your sensitivity to the need for Canadians to know more about each other, and I think you're right that we're lacking that. If you had, for example, social studies classes that were governed strictly by provincial curriculum – and you pointed that out; that, you know, in B.C. they may want to study the Haida Indians and in other provinces we might want to study other things – would you see a role for at least getting together so that we're not just learning our own regional histories but also learning the regional histories of other provinces?

MR. WHITSON: Well, yes, we have to learn about each other like we mentioned, but we should specialize a little bit more on our provinces so we know more about our province.

MS BARRETT: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for giving it a lot of thought and to you and your classmates who are bilingual. Our congratulations for that achievement.

Bob, you wanted to get in?

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Maybe just a comment on how delighted I am that you came forward this morning. Of all the people who have spoken to us, your presentation in French is the first one we've heard. I'm just delighted that you put the effort you did and spoke so well this morning. I think you're a credit to your community, and I really appreciate your comments this morning, all four of you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

MRS. GAGNON: I'd like to add that it's excellent French as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. Senator Bud Olson. Good morning, Senator. Welcome.

MR. OLSON: Good morning. Thank you. First, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to express my appreciation to you for extending an invitation to me to appear before you today with respect to some views I have respecting a new Constitution for Canada. I want to say at the outset that I am something of an unrepentant pragmatist, and by that I mean that I think we should pursue things we have some possibility of achieving, and also that I hold the highest priority of a Constitution or any of the functions and structures of government to be respect for the rights of an

individual. That's fairly important in today's discussion, I think, because we're hearing more and more about someone has some special rights because of who their ancestors might have been or where they live in Canada. As far as I'm concerned, we're all equal, and we ought to set up structures of government both provincial and federal that honour that fact.

The first thing I think, Mr. Chairman, is that we should look at the political structures that have failed or have failed to live up to the requirements of changing times since 1867 when Canada's first Constitution, or the BNA Act, was struck by the Fathers of Confederation. I think one of the first things we see is the services that are expected of governments by the citizens, whatever it may be: social services, education, and all the other things that have changed very dramatically since 1867 or some 124, 125 years ago. I think this has caused or at least fostered some of the difficulties we have today, particularly with Quebec, because I think the use of the federal spending power to get involved in certain areas that were defined – and the definition was accepted as exclusively within the provincial jurisdiction – is one of the things that has caused more difficulty with Quebec over time than any other single thing. Of course, in some cases they just simply opted out. They did that partly in some of the medicare areas. They certainly did it with the Canada pension plan; they opted out completely and set up their own. I might say that perhaps it was a good thing for Quebec to do that, because they built up an enormous fund – *caisse de dépôt* – in Quebec from the pension collections that have come in. Where that will lead I don't know, but it looks pretty good right at the moment.

So the federal spending power: for the federal government to get involved in a lot of things that were clearly provincial jurisdiction is one of the problems. We should look at that very sincerely and honestly and try to redistribute responsibilities between the two levels of government in a realistic way to fit the 1990s and whatever part of the next century we get into, and then stick to it. I think whatever was the cause or the reason back whenever the federal government started to move into these areas – I don't claim to be an expert on that. You can read your history just as well as I can. But you know we're not finished with it yet, because to me at least day care is clearly a provincial responsibility and yet the federal government – they've backed off a little now, but this federal government and the previous federal government, both of different parties, have started to make noises like they're going to get into the business of day care across Canada. Maybe they should; maybe they shouldn't. I think there's a public demand for it, but whether one level of government or the other should be doing it is something we should work out and then provide them with the financial resources to do it.

9:50

Now, I mentioned some of Quebec's problems. It started out, I think, quite clearly with the federal government using its spending power the way I described it, but there are other provinces who have difficulty with what the status quo is now, and that is that they want some form of equality, either in addition to or other than representation by population. Being a pragmatist, I just think it will never happen in my lifetime. I don't see any indication coming out of the larger provinces, whether it's only Quebec and Ontario or British Columbia or others, who are willing to recognize that Prince Edward Island ought to have as much representation in a federal structure as, for example, Ontario or Quebec or even Alberta. You know,

Alberta has about 25 times as much population, I think, as Prince Edward Island, and why, if you really believe in individuals' rights, would we accept the argument that they ought to have as much representation in some federal structure as some others? In Ontario it's worse. It's approximately 80 to 1 there, I guess. I understand the argument that representation by population does set up some distortions in the federal structure, so I can understand why we would want to try to equalize that now after we've been in the business of trying to have a country for 125 years.

You know, we could have either more provinces or less provinces. Probably we ought to have a whole lot more. Northern Ontario thinks that for them to be under the jurisdiction of southern Ontario in many respects is out of date and old fashioned, and they really don't get the kind of representation they believe they ought to have. Of course, even in Alberta we have seen fit over various times to set up special northern councils and other things to have a little more interest specifically in that area. My preference, I have to say, would be to have less provinces. Probably we should only have four instead of 10. All the Atlantic provinces could get together and have one province. Perhaps all the western provinces could get together. Then we would have four provinces that would be reasonably equal insofar as individuals are concerned. Communication and travel is not the problem it was 125 years ago, and I don't think it's very much farther from Cornwall, Ontario, to the region right up against Manitoba than it is across all the four western provinces. I think we should have a look at this.

The other thing is that I don't think we should pursue some structures that are going to give us a happy relationship in Canada because we think that we're equal and we're not overpowered by some other larger political entity. We should embark on a new concept of equality, and one of them is the size that I've just been talking about.

I think we should unhyphenate Canadians. There are French-Canadians, aboriginal-Canadians, Italian-Canadians, and all kinds of different Canadians. For my part, I believe we should just – and I'm not the first one. I remember that the Hon. John George Diefenbaker, Prime Minister of Canada, was one of the – I'm not sure that he was the original advocate of that, but he certainly was the most vociferous one that I know about taking the hyphens out of Canadians. I think that probably leads us to disbanding the department of multiculturalism. I think people should pursue their own culture in their own time and with their own money; I don't think it's something the federal government should do. We probably should respond to some of the leading Indians and disband the department of Indian affairs, spend an equal amount of money to get them up to full speed with the rest of Canadians, and stop this paternalism that's been going on there for the past 60 or a hundred years.

The other thing is that I believe we should attempt to set up reasonably equal political entities assigned a new, revised authority that they need to deal with the kinds of services Canadians expect from their governments in the '90s; give them both the authority to do the job and to collect the taxes that are necessary to support it. I believe the result of all that, Mr. Chairman, would probably be a Canada where people from one end of the country to the other would feel more satisfied that they are being treated as equals with other people in the country, no matter where they live or no matter who their ancestors were.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Senator. You've had a wealth of political and public experience. I'm sure there are some questions that will have arisen.

Jack Ady.

MR. ADY: Thank you, Senator. Your comments were interesting. I have several questions, but I'll just deal with one that I have a particular interest in. I wonder if you could just enlarge a little bit on what type of government or other means might be put in place that would satisfy the aboriginal people. We hear a lot about self-government. You didn't really say that that was an alternative. Could you just give us a little bit more of what your thoughts might be on the direction that could take?

MR. OLSON: Well, what I didn't want to do was to get into trying to explain some of the concepts that have been attached to certain phrases like the one you've just used, self-government. I think there is a certain level of self-government that Indian reservations ought to have that they in fact do not enjoy today. For example, there is a distribution of money that belongs to the Indian reservations that is not completely in their hands. The other part is: I'm not sure what the provinces spend on it now, but the federal government's budget for the department of Indian affairs is about 3 and a half billion dollars. It's a lot of money, and I think a very large percentage of it is spent for administration. The Indians complain about that. You know, we've got this paternalistic attitude: somebody in the department of Indian affairs running their affairs for them. It isn't only a self-government type of thing; it's the administration of a whole lot of things including – it's improving slowly, but not rapidly enough. I think we could get far better value for both the taxpayers of Canada and for the Indians that are being served if we were to phase that department out and hand that amount of money over to the Indians, and they could use it in a better way.

MR. ADY: Thank you. I just wanted to be clear. Your answer to the regional disparity that we all have complained about, particularly in the west, is the regional concept. As I understand it, you feel that by disbanding some of the provinces and amalgamating them, we would thereby gain a larger representation as a block, and that would be your answer as opposed to the Senate reform that's been touted. That's really what you were driving at?

MR. OLSON: Well, if the four western provinces were one province, you'd have I think about 80 seats. That would be not exactly the same as Ontario – I think they have 95 at the moment – but you'd get close. I opened by saying that I'm a bit of a pragmatist, and that is that you pursue something that's possible. I just do not believe that Ontario and Quebec and perhaps some of the other larger provinces like British Columbia – maybe they are, but I'm sure that when we require consent, the approval, of two of the provinces that have two-thirds of the population and who are not going to go along with a triple E Senate, then we're kind of spinning our wheels to try and promote it. It just simply isn't going to happen.

10:00

MS BARRETT: Actually, that bridges very well into what I wanted to raise. You are not only the first Senator we're able to discuss this matter with in these hearings but probably the only Senator with whom we'll be able to talk about the Senate, so my questions relate to that as well.

I understand that during our hearings a couple of people have proposed equalizing our Parliament by moving into regions and abandoning the concept of provincial jurisdiction, which is very interesting. I would like to report to you, however, that of all the people who have raised the concept of Senate reform in any context, 99 percent have expressed not just a reflection about triple E – there's been a whole range of options put to us – but have said it's time this agency was elected. One percent has suggested that appointees be vetted by another House, in other words the Parliament, just as is done with some elements of the judiciary in the United States. So I'd like to go right to the very difficult question we are facing, I believe, as Canadians, not just Albertans, and that is: how do we justify an institution that is not elected?

MR. OLSON: Well, I don't think we should do that. It depends on what your concept of the Senate's task is. If you think the Senate is there to govern the country, it should not be appointed; it should be elected. But it's not. That's what the House of Commons' job is. The Senate is there as one of the important checks and balances in the system. I think for the most part it has acted that way. I don't think the Senate has ever tried to pretend that they are governing Canada.

MS BARRETT: Okay, let me counter. I won't engage in a long debate, because I know a lot of people want to talk about this. I can tell you what the response from ordinary Albertans will be. In the United States the Senate is there to offer its version of a check and balance to Congress, and it is elected. Now, people don't bring up the British corollary, which is not elected, but let me ask you how you answer the question: if the agency in the United States, which performs largely the same function as the Canadian Senate, stands for election, why can't the Canadian Senate?

MR. OLSON: Well, the United States Senate did not start out as an elected body; it started out as assigned or designated positions from the states. I think the states had a great deal to say in seeing who was designated. We call it appointments here, but designated is the same thing. In 1913 they decided to elect them. I know it's popular to say that the Senate should be elected. For me, quite frankly, I don't care. I'm not going to run, so I have no personal vested interest in it. But you see, there's one problem when you start to elect a body. As soon as you elect a body, then they've got to worry about being re-elected, so they start to act exactly like the House of Commons or any other politicians. I don't see any useful purpose in having two bodies down there coming from essentially the same roots. Quite frankly, I think that when one political party is ahead, they'll elect both the members in the House of Commons and the members in the Senate. For example, until recently – and I don't want to talk about the last few days or anything – I think for the last decade and a half if you'd elected Senators from western Canada every one in Alberta would have been a Conservative because of the support of that political party. That's where the difficulty comes in. Quite frankly, I think I'd rather abolish the Senate than have just a duplicate of what's going on in the House of Commons.

I want to say this, too, and I don't want to make it a long-winded answer: I think one of the greatest problems with the Senate is that it is too politically partisan. You've got the government side and the opposition side. I was leader of the government there for a while. It was my job to get the government's program through. So I did; I pursued my job. But I

don't think it was the right thing. I felt very uncomfortable because there were a few times when I really believed that if we were going to carry out our responsibilities as regional representatives, we should have had our foot in the door. There's lots more to say yet.

MS BARRETT: I don't think you have to apologize for long answers. There's no question that this is a complicated subject, and as I said, you're probably the only Senator who is going to be in front of us during these hearings.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, thank you very much, Bud, for your time. I think one of the things you mentioned that perhaps other people haven't – and it's because of your experience, I'm sure – is the concern of the utilization of federal spending power in the fields of provincial jurisdiction. That's the root of many, many problems, and yet it is not recognized to be so by the average Canadian. I think perhaps you pointing it out today was a very interesting and useful addition to our committee's hearings. Thank you very kindly.

Oh, I'm sorry. Gary.

MR. SEVERTSON: Senator, you mentioned the flaws of the present Senate appointed by the federal government, whatever party's in power. Do you think it would be better if they were appointed by the provincial government instead of elected, like you were saying, which would get away from the allegiance to the appointed person?

MR. OLSON: Yeah, I think on balance there are problems with both. I could go into them in some detail because I sat at the cabinet table in Ottawa when they really were going to this. You remember that in 1978 they came along with the House of the federation. Under that structure the provinces were going to appoint the Senate, or at least they were going to provide the list from which the Prime Minister had to take appointments. There are some problems with that.

But on balance, to keep my answer short, probably it would be better if the provinces appointed them rather than the federal government. I suppose if we're pure, though, we're supposed to be objective. That's why I suggested that we should be far less partisan than has been the image of the Senate until now.

MR. SEVERTSON: Just one quick supplementary. You said you would never think Ontario and Quebec would go along with the triple E. I think you're aware that in the last agreement at Meech Lake before it died, Ontario agreed to go down to 16 Senators and the prairie provinces up to eight each.

MR. OLSON: Well, in my view that was a very magnanimous and generous statement by the then Premier of Ontario, that he was going to give eight of his 24 to western Canada, I believe. But I have never heard Bob Rae even suggest that he would support that kind of concept. The only thing I've ever heard him comment on is to abolish the Senate. That's the NDP's position and has been all the time.

MRS. GAGNON: May I just quickly . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, we could go on at some length here. Time has expired, but one last question.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you. The matter of collective rights versus individual rights is one of the other very, very big issues.

Do you feel that the rights, for instance, of the Anglophones in Quebec to education in their language would be looked after just because there are enough individuals demanding it? I think you're suggesting: take group rights out of the Charter; don't talk about group rights there at all. What's the balance between the individual and the group?

MR. OLSON: As usual, you've found something that's a little bit different from what I was talking about. I said what I said about individual vis-à-vis group rights at the beginning because it seems to me there's a great push now for people to have some special rights. They call it distinctive rights in Quebec, distinct society. Then we have the aboriginals, because of what's happened in the past year or so, having particular rights because of their ancestry. What I really want to say is that I don't believe that is as important as respecting individual rights in the whole structure. I think people should be able to use either French or English and educate their children in one or the other. I think the attitude of the provincial government in Quebec toward English-speaking Canadians in Quebec is a little bit wrong because it sets their individual rights aside slightly for that collective. I know there are going to be difficulties there along the way, but that's why I got into it to start with, because I'm afraid that . . . I was born about 60 miles north of here 65 or 75 years ago, the same place where Crowfoot was born, and I don't think he's any better or worse than me. He didn't have any control over where he was going to be born, and neither did I. We happened to be born where our mother was when it happened, and we were equal after that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I guess we're all in exactly that same boat. There's no doubt about that. Well, thank you very much.

John MacLaren. Good morning.

10:10

MR. MacLAREN: Good morning. I'm pleased to be able to be here today. I liked very much to hear the young people, who are going to be sitting where you people are sitting at some time down the road. I liked to hear what they had to say this morning because I really believe that when you go back 125 years in this country the obvious thing is that there has not been enough communication. If there had been more communication, we'd understand each other better, so it's a very nice thing to hear that from youth. I'd like to compliment their teachers for helping them along those lines.

But what I have to say here is that I do not believe Albertans and probably most other Canadians outside Quebec truly understand what has been happening in Quebec for decades and maybe for 100 years. I'm a westerner right to the core, but when you stop and listen to the people in Quebec that are speaking now, the message is very much that they want their own country, as we all know. Now, two nations within a nation has not worked. We all know that or we wouldn't be sitting here today. When you look at the cause of the problem, it would seem to me that the problem really was created many years ago in the settlement after the Plains of Abraham. The French people were given their own law and order, their own religion, and their own language, and I think in their own way the people in power in those days started us on the trail to the effect – when you think of cause and effect – that we're at today. So we know it hasn't worked. What are we going to do about it?

The thing is that we have to determine – and maybe Quebecers have to let us know. It would seem they're saying to us,

"What are you going to do for us now?" We sit out here, and I honestly don't believe most Albertans understand what René Lévesque was saying and maybe what Bourassa has been saying and what these commissions are coming out with. It's very startling what we hear coming from them down there, but maybe it's been there for a long time, and we've seen it but haven't really listened. I think, again, maybe youth understand because they're not stuck in their ways and are looking at it and saying, "We have to communicate."

What we hear from Quebec we tend to hear from the political elite, from the intellectual elite, and they have a reason and a cause for what they're doing. But again, what do the people of Quebec want? It's almost like: what comes first, the chicken or the egg? They're saying to us, "What are you going to do for us?" and a lot of Albertans and westerners and maybe all other Canadians are still saying, and we've been saying for years, "Really, what do you want?" I think that has to be determined before we can go anywhere. So I'd like to tell you that I think what the politicians in Quebec are trying to do right now is almost like the old story: you know, they're trying to hit us between the eyes with a two-by-four to get our attention because they can't possibly be thinking we can give them what they're telling us they want, what the politicians are telling us.

Now, I'd like to tell you a story. I worked for an international company in Medicine Hat here many years ago in the early '60s, and that international company decided to build a large plant in Quebec. They decided that because of the way this plant was run in Medicine Hat, they would not bring in their top-level management people or their upper level or whatever; they would bring in people that were supervisors on the floor of a factory. They brought them to Medicine Hat for training because we were doing a good job out here in our factory. Now, there came a time on a Saturday afternoon when we all got together for a few bubbies in a local watering hole, and it was very interesting what developed. I'm talking about 1962-63, a long time ago. What developed was that we were all sitting around chatting, and a real discussion started between a few of the people from Quebec. It developed into such a heated discussion that I asked one of them sitting there that I was talking to what they were talking about, because I didn't understand it; I don't speak French. Now, the fellow said, "Well, this guy over here is a separatist." I really don't think I had ever heard that word prior to that, not the way I heard the connotation that day. Of course, I said, "What are you talking about?" I mean, it didn't even sink in. He said: "Well, he's a separatist. He wants Quebec to leave Canada." I said, "I can't understand this." But really, this gentleman told me that of the 12 people that came out here from Quebec, from a kind of small town in Quebec, four of those were separatists. It was really quite a surprise to me because I didn't realize that.

So I have to say again, what do the people of Quebec really want? We have been very sure about that before we start striking off in all directions again, trying to keep everybody happy in this country. So it was very interesting to me, but I do not believe that . . . We've tried this other way all these years. What can we give you? What can we do? It hasn't worked. Obviously, it hasn't worked, and I don't think you can buy your friends. I mean, if anybody has proved it, I think Albertans have. We've contributed a tremendous amount to the federal coffers, and a lot of that money has been directed in those avenues to try to keep peace in the family, as it were. Again, it hasn't worked or we wouldn't be here.

Now, there is no way you can have hyphenated Canadians. I think we've proved that; there are no two ways about it. I think

also, as Senator Olson stated, everyone is equal. I'm sure you're going to hear that time and time again at these committee meetings. There can be no sovereignty association if this is what they're talking about. If they stay, they have to pay their own share. Maybe that's part of the problem. I don't know how they could feel they're part of the country. In a way they haven't really kicked in, put their shoulders to the harness in that sense, because I believe the political elite have been doing a pretty good job for Quebeckers.

We have to come back again to: if Quebeckers truly want their own country, truly want their own nation, then I don't think we can put obstacles in their way. Like, when Jacques Parizeau comes out to western Canada, we're talking about communicating. We may not like his message, but I think we have to listen to him the same as when René Lévesque came out here. If we don't, I don't think we can sweep it under the rug anymore. You know, who do they speak for? Themselves or the people of Quebec? When they have had meetings like you're having here, the figures we get are that it's a very, very high percentage of people wanting to have their own nation. If those numbers are accurate, if that is the case, what we have to do is not put obstacles in their way. We have to try to get down that road. If they're serious about separating, then we have to not put obstacles in their way. We don't have to pay their way, because there will be some very, very hard bargaining to follow if that is the case. But I think we have to be realistic, we have to look at these things, and we have to get our heads out of the sand. This is an ongoing problem. It's been going and going, and I think we have to stop and really take a hard look at it.

If we have that attitude, I think it will pay dividends later for all parts of the country, not only Quebec but all other areas. We can still be their friend even if they're not part of the country. We can be helpful. When you take the political discussion to the nth degree, you end up like the Basques in Spain, like the Irish in Great Britain. That is not the Canadian way. We don't want that way for sure; nobody does. So what I'm saying is that we have to have more communication and dialogue if we still have the time. The native issues: I think that it's the same thing as Senator Olson said. It hasn't worked. We have to try to get beyond it and let these people carry on their own way.

10:20

One other thing: I think that when you look at the money that Alberta has tried – like, as strong Canadians, there's no two ways about it; we have been. There is a Professor Mansell from the University of Calgary that has come with a number from 1961 to 1988 that Albertans have contributed, something like \$143.5 billion net contribution to the federal government. Now, we've done our share. I'll tell you what: I think that what we should all be given as Albertans is an Order of Canada badge each or something to be recognized for what we've tried to do to help this country stay together. I'm not preaching that we should fall apart, but I think we have to be very serious.

If nothing else, there's one thing I'm very happy for, and that is that as Albertans we're being forced – and the Quebeckers are forcing us – to take a hard look at the issues, to become more political. We all have to do that. The man on the street and the lady on the street and the children like we saw today have to think a little more politically. We have to do that, because we can't leave it up to Bob or Jim or somebody else to do it. We have to know when we vote what we're voting for, because that is the democratic way, and we've gotten away from that. The youth don't even bother going to the polling station,

I don't believe, to a big extent anymore. They say, "Why bother?" That's very bad. So I'm glad to see the youth here today.

Anyway, I think that the political process here in Canada is going to be much stronger because of what is happening, regardless of the outcome.

MR. CHAIRMAN: John, there are some questions, I'm sure.
Pam Barrett.

MS BARRETT: Yes. I received a phone call at home a few weeks ago from the gentleman sitting across the way. We had never spoken before or met before. I'd like to ask you, John, now, to tell the story that you told me; it would only take a minute. I think it made your case about communications, about the management going into Quebec. It was you who phoned me, wasn't it?

MR. MacLAREN: No.

MS BARRETT: It wasn't you?

MR. MacLAREN: No, it wasn't, Pam.

MS BARRETT: Oh. When you told about the Quebec people coming here to Medicine Hat, I remembered getting a call from somebody who told me a story that was very similar in reverse, whereby the English people who were brought into Quebec to construct a plant were perceived by the Quebecois as being sort of, "Oh, yeah, the old colonial masters coming to teach us what we already know," sort of thing. I thought it was you who phoned.

MR. MacLAREN: No, it wasn't, Pam.

MS BARRETT: I'm so sorry.

MR. MacLAREN: That's all right; that's quite all right. There are probably many stories that are very similar that we may not all be aware of. I truly don't believe that the French people have any hatred for the rest of us, and I don't think we've got any hatred for the French people, but there's sure a lack of communication. There's no two ways about that.

MS BARRETT: That was the case the guy made too. Small world.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, there's another case of lack of communication.

MS BARRETT: No. Failure of memory.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Failure of communication, yes.
Okay. Yolande Gagnon.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you very much for those comments about communication and dialogue. I'm quite convinced that there are two myths abroad. One is that Quebec wants to leave, and the other is that Canada wants them to leave. I don't think that's the case at all. Quebec is not monolithic any more than we are; they're not a homogeneous people. So how would you suggest we improve this communication? What mechanisms should we put into place? More exchange trips, as the students

suggested? What is the answer to this lack of knowledge about each other?

MR. MacLAREN: Well, I really don't have that answer; I honestly don't. I think that the powers that be – and there's a lot of good gray matter, a lot of good heads that probably can organize that. Communication is talking, and that's what it really amounts to. I don't think we've got to spend piles of money, because we proved that isn't the answer. I think it's a matter of understanding, and maybe in our education systems we have to be a little more intent on our social studies programs, as the youth said, to make sure that people understand each other within the country.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks, John. Well, I think we've heard every place we've gone and from almost everyone comments that we have not learned our history very well in this country, and I think that's a fact that we'll certainly keep in mind.

You mentioned one thing, that we have been asking, "What can we give you?" to Quebec. One of the programs that I think was tried, has been tried, is still in place, is the official bilingualism policy, the Official Languages Act and so on. Do you believe that that has been a positive or a negative factor in terms of the relationships?

MR. MacLAREN: I don't think the multiculturalism programs have served the purpose. I don't think that the language has had any benefit. Obviously it hasn't, Mr. Horsman, or we wouldn't have all the problems. I think that they have to look beyond that. I am not convinced that by spending gobs of money on everybody trying to become bilingual – I really believe that in Quebec, if they wish to have French, I have no problem with that; that's quite all right. I believe that in the rest of Canada we should speak whatever language we wish. I think a second language may be in some areas Cree; it might be Japanese; it might be Spanish. I think to learn extra languages is fantastic. My heritage happens to be British, so I didn't have the benefit as some of the people I knew that learned a second language at home. I think that's great, but I think that when you start making things mandatory and legislating – you know, we've been making laws in this country for 125 years and we just keep finding more to make, and it seems to me we need a little less government. I think the people are okay, but I'm not sure about the political process.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, thank you very much for your comments. We're running just slightly behind time, but I still think it's time for a coffee/stretch break for all of us. I think we could use it.

[The committee adjourned from 10:26 a.m. to 10:39 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, if I could get your attention, I'd like to recommence the discussions, and I'll call Cathy Smith forward, please.

MRS. SMITH: Good morning.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good morning.

MRS. SMITH: I'm going to read mine. I think everyone has a copy, though.

Saying things like, "Let the Frogs go," is not a constructive solution to the constitutional crisis. I might also add that my mother is one of those Frogs.

First, let us look at levels of government. There is a proposal to have a third level of government collecting taxes, namely municipalities. This is an absolutely ludicrous proposal. Canadians believe the present system of two levels is unresponsive and hard to figure out. Municipalities are currently established through the Municipal Government Act, and that's the way it should remain. I feel that municipalities spend far too much money on labour to buy votes and build empires and then whine about having to cut programs when the province tries to be responsible with taxpayers' money. When these same municipalities run deficits, they run to the provincial government to bail them out.

The question of Quebec's role in the Constitution, while not foremost in all minds, certainly is on mine. I was an Anglo-phone Quebecer for 24 years before moving to Alberta. I was a *maudit anglais*, but that did not deter my parents nor my five brothers and two sisters from becoming responsible citizens of Quebec. I have a great deal of sympathy for Quebecers. That is not to say that I agree with bleeding hearts who lump that in with bilingualism, French immersion, et cetera, because that has nothing to do with it.

Throughout its history Quebec has been constrained first by religious leaders who ran their lives, even to telling them how to vote. Then when they were excluded from the repatriation of the Constitution, their alienation became more pronounced. Meech Lake could have brought them into partnership with the rest of us, but some of the same people who shut them out in 1982 succeeded in slamming them once again on June 23, 1990.

Now the proposal of the Allaire report shocks Canadians. I personally do not find it astounding. I would hope that Alberta would ask for the same. Quebec should not have special privileges. However, after saying that, I must add that Quebec already has control of immigration, control of language, and civil law, unlike the common law by which the rest of Canada is ruled.

The whole area of responsibilities of the provincial and federal governments must be changed, and this leads to my next topic. Provincial responsibilities have to be drastically altered. I liken Quebec to a dysfunctional family. We have nurtured an unproductive family whose members need a tough love approach: "Be responsible for your future because there are no more free rides." The constant bailout of Canada's children has produced an abhorrent debt and no growth in the family but a lot of resentment on behalf of the responsible members, not unlike the prodigal son's brother.

I believe that language, culture, education, health care, immigration, manpower, and social programs should be provincial responsibilities, with defence, external affairs, and monetary policy looked after by a central authority. With the implementation of more responsibilities and more autonomy we would have much stronger, productive provinces and a strong central authority as a result.

One example of how provincial responsibility would be more efficient would be in the area of language. Bilingualism is admirable, but the policy of official bilingualism is one of the best examples of how political imbalance in our existing system of government has attempted to legislate a factual impossibility. This is not a functionally bilingual country, and it will not become one.

I personally knew civil servants in Ottawa who went on French course for two years on full salary, because their jobs were

designated bilingual, and came back never to speak French again. However, if they passed the French exam, they were given the bilingual bonus. We wonder why our country is in debt and imagine such waste of manpower, time, and money. No; language should become a provincial responsibility. Minorities are protected under the Charter of Rights, so the most efficient and effective way to deal with language is at a provincial level.

Also under provincial responsibilities I see the collection of taxes. If we are to take on these tasks, we must have the funding. I see this happening much the same as national charities work. Each province's foundation raises its funds and a certain fee is paid nationally for programs of a national nature. This would mean we would pay a tax to the central authority for national interests such as external affairs and national defence. How the federal system would work is supposedly being looked at by the experts.

I hope the experts come up with something better than the ludicrous suggestion of Willard Estey and Peter Nicholson that a constituent assembly be approved to recommend constitutional reform. Their proposal would have 250 to 300 unelected people deciding on changes to the Constitution. We couldn't get 10 Premiers to agree, but we are going to get 250 people to reach consensus? The only answer is to have autonomous provinces with elected representatives from each province to the central authority and abolish the Senate as we know it. While I support the concept of the triple E – I've been a member of triple E for five years, and I have my pin on today – it does not go far enough. The idea of referenda every time we breathe is also mind-boggling.

The last area I would like to speak about is the character of a Canadian. One thing I find in common between Quebec and Alberta is our love of life – our *joie de vivre*. A lot of Canadians take themselves too seriously. We can't joke about anything anymore. Canadians have become so soft. We want everything handed to us including the care and nurturing of our families – that is, cradle to grave – while we complain about rising taxes. How many people stand up and sing the national anthem when opportunity arises? We laugh at our flag, show disrespect to our national anthem, and then we wonder why there is no wealth of goodwill among Canadians when we need it most.

Alberta is a wonderful province and is a leader in many areas, but we must be armed with a made-in-Alberta position when talks begin on the future of Canada.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Cathy.

Bob Hawkesworth.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I agree with you. We don't laugh enough. This business seems to be pretty serious business. Maybe if we had a little more levity, we might make more progress.

I was just interested in your thoughts about the division of powers between the provinces and the federal government. You basically outlined the three of defence, external affairs, and monetary policy remaining with the central government. My first question would be: do you see some other areas for the federal government to be involved in in addition to those, or is that basically your list? If so, do you feel the same need for a triple E Senate? If the powers of the federal government are basically limited to a small number of these key areas, do you see the

same need for a triple E Senate as under the existing arrangement?

MRS. SMITH: Well, that's why I say that I believe in the concept of the triple E. If we get nothing else, then I would say the triple E is the way to go. If we do get more of these responsibilities, then I see a whole different structure. I don't know what that would be. But then what would be the need for it? It would be some other form, I suppose.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Would you see some other areas besides the three you identified for the federal government? I suppose post office and so on, a few others.

10:49

MRS. SMITH: That would basically cover it. I haven't covered all of them; I know that.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: So you see quite a dramatic, significant shift in responsibilities much along the lines of the Allaire report in Quebec.

MRS. SMITH: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.
Fred Bradley, Jack Ady, Gary.

MR. BRADLEY: Well, Bob asked one of my questions. I wanted to explore this question of the Senate. You suggest something beyond what a triple E would be, and you are suggesting provincial elected representatives go to the central authority, are you?

MRS. SMITH: A central authority, yeah, and then maybe that would be the elimination of the Senate.

MR. BRADLEY: You'd still have a House of Commons?

MRS. SMITH: Yes.

MR. BRADLEY: You'd have a second House.

MRS. SMITH: Well, I guess, yeah. I don't know. You know, this is just a proposal based on sort of a confederal idea.

MR. BRADLEY: In this new notion you have, do you recognize the equality of provinces, that each province would have equal representation in such a body?

MRS. SMITH: I haven't thought enough about it to say, you know, how many people we'd have from each province or anything like that.

MR. BRADLEY: Okay. One other question I wanted to ask. You mentioned the national anthem as being important, I think in terms of one of the symbols of the country, and we don't respect it. One of the concerns I've had about the national anthem is that the English words and the French words mean different things. Should we be looking, in terms of our national symbols, such that our national anthem translates and means the same thing in both languages?

MRS. SMITH: Well, Roger Doucette used to sing a completely different one, too, at the hockey games in Montreal. So I guess

that would be an area to look at, yes, although you can't always translate directly from French to English.

MR. BRADLEY: I realize that, but actually the words in English and French – they're entirely different versions. They don't even talk about the same things or concepts.

MRS. SMITH: Yeah, they do. Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Gary, then Jack.

MR. SEVERTSON: Yes. You mentioned that the responsibilities have gradually altered and mentioned that Canada's like a dysfunctional family. Do you mean you're advocating that transfer payments be changed somewhat?

MRS. SMITH: Right.

MR. SEVERTSON: It's interesting. We heard a fellow in the round table discussion who was mentioning that in that same vein, but he was using the maritimes. We always hear about all the money Quebec gets, but in actual fact, I think if you go on a per capita basis, the maritimes receive more money. That was the suggestion one of the professors was saying, that maybe that stops them from thinking of . . .

MRS. SMITH: Well, that's what I'm saying. You know, with more responsibility of the provinces, if they are collecting their own taxes, then they would automatically, I would hope, be more responsible with the spending and with the selection of programs that they are offering to the people in their province. I know that the Atlantic provinces unfortunately do not have the same wealth of resources that Alberta has, but our resources are depleting and we have managed to diversify and still send all our tax money to Ottawa.

MR. SEVERTSON: How do you see something like manpower with unemployment insurance?

MRS. SMITH: I would like to see manpower and unemployment dealt with by the provinces.

MR. SEVERTSON: How about the transferability of it from province to province?

MRS. SMITH: Well, yeah, that would all have to be looked at. I don't imagine it would be all that difficult. When I lived in Quebec, I didn't have a problem getting served in the hospitals in Ontario.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Jack Ady.

MR. ADY: Thank you. Just an observation on your presentation. You indicated that bilingualism should not be tagged to Quebec, and I have to agree with you. I have always felt that Quebec was blamed for something they really didn't initiate. It was initiated by the federal government of the day, and it was enacted.

The other thing that I wanted to just get some clarification on. When you talk about taxation at another level, primarily the municipal level, you're talking about perhaps some of the initiative that is out there for municipalities to be entrenched in the Constitution to allow them to come in with a level of income tax. That's what you're talking about?

MRS. SMITH: I am against that, yes.

MR. ADY: Okay. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, thank you very much. There was one point I just wanted to touch on. You are strongly opposed to the concept of a constituent assembly. You mention one specific proposal which would have 250 to 300 unelected people. Is it the unelected aspect of constituent assemblies that offends you?

MRS. SMITH: That's part of it. The other part is that I certainly would not want someone speaking for me who had not been elected. If you're going to go and grab a couple of people off the street, I would suggest that a lot of them don't know what's going on. So I certainly do not want anyone who isn't even elected to be speaking on constitutional issues, deciding them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Well, you obviously want Quebec to stay in Canada.

MRS. SMITH: Yes, I do.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And you think in order to achieve that, it's more likely to result from a decentralized confederation.

MRS. SMITH: That's the only way. We've tried everything else, and everyone keeps ignoring Quebec, and this is the only way to go now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for your thoughtful presentation.

Grant Pisko, Monarch broadcasting, and Dr. Ken Sauer is joining Grant as well.

DR. SAUER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to make some preliminary points, and then Grant will deal with the report that we sent in to you.

First of all, we applaud and compliment you and the task force and the government of Alberta for taking the opportunity to go out to the province and hear what people think. I think the fact of the Allaire report and some of the other actions in the province of Quebec have given us a window of opportunity to come up with some of the things that we think Albertans should have in their province vis-à-vis the demands of the list of requests that you have from the province of Quebec.

We have done something very different here, Mr. Chairman, and that is that Monarch Communications, in the communications and information business, decided . . . When you forwarded the brochure Alberta in a New Canada, we ordered about 60 sets and then asked for volunteers in our company to come together to sit down with us to identify some of the issues that we as a communications company thought might be of interest to pass on to you. We had 20 people volunteer. All we needed was about 16, we thought, to make it worth while, but we had 20 people volunteer, and we sat down and talked about the various issues. Although we had about 20 or 24 issues, we're going to focus today on just four or five of those.

What we found out, for example, are some of the things you probably have heard, that bilingualism was an enforced type of federal program and should not be blamed upon the province of Quebec. People take it for granted that that's the way it came about. We have issues, for example, about the Constitution

being written 125 years ago by what we thought at that particular time were very articulate and informed people.

We think the Constitution as it stands by and large is not that bad. What we need to do, though, is fine-tune sections 91 to 95. We feel there that the order of the day – don't forget, it started out as an Upper and Lower Canada discussion, and they finally dragged New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in to make it look more like a general representation for a Constitution. At that particular time they wrote some of those clauses in what I call very ambiguous language, and it's caused a lot of problems over the years. So it would seem to me that if someone could just take sections 91 to 95 and identify those programs and/or those departments that should be under provincial jurisdiction and those which should be federal, and then of course identify other issues that could be shared at some time or another in the future . . . It seems to me and to us as we talked about these things that there is a rule or a principle, which Grant will elaborate on, and that is that services and funding should be as close to the people being served as possible. So when you have funding and/or federal involvement in programs, they're so far away from the source that it misses some of the importance or the impact that it might have.

We did talk about the constituent assembly, by the way. Notwithstanding Cathy Smith's point, we talked about an elected constituent assembly of about 10 people from each province, whereby people like the Peter Lougheeds and the Ernest Mannings and the Helen Hunleys, who are informed people by the way, would represent, say, a constituency in this province, and where you would have at least one or two women on it, because they do come from a different point of view, and at least one aboriginal. So each province would have 10 people, and they would then meet in constituent assemblies once every two years. They would discuss current issues, identify a consensus in a plenary session, and then have these principles ratified by the Legislatures in the provinces and at the federal government level, thereby each two years dealing with the current issues rather than having just the first ministers' or whatever meetings are held.

10:59

We talked, too, about aboriginal rights at our meeting, and we found there that the Proclamation of 1763, by King George III by the way, gave the natives a lot of leeway in terms of what they could do and couldn't do. Much to our and everyone else's surprise, neither the federal nor provincial Legislatures have changed anything from that proclamation, so they do have a lot of rights enshrined from King George III. You may not have respected him for some of the things he did or some of the things they said about him, but the fact is that the Proclamation of 1763 is there. Some of the actions in the United States, for example, in the 1860s or 1850s indicate that aboriginals were handed a different type of self-government, and I think that's a model that could be used.

Well, what we did, then, was we talked about these issues. We then asked a subcommittee to put a brief together for this committee here, and then another subcommittee, Mr. Chairman, actually went out and prepared a live television program, which was shown last night from 7 to 8. In that program we identified four issues, with people from our staff making general comments, and then had people phone in and comment on that. So what we're going to do today is give you the script for that and also a videotape of a preliminary to this program last night. Actually, there's a little plug in there for your task force, indicating that you're going to be here on Friday and that people

should come out, because we think there's a lot of apathy generally across Canada. You have a very formidable job, by the way, because after screening through all of what you hear today and across the province of Alberta, you're going to have to come up with some recommendations that will have an impact upon those young people and everybody else across this province for many years to come. We don't envy your task. So that is our last night's project there, Mr. Chairman.

Today we want to talk about five different issues: national debt and taxation; representative government, which is going away from partisanship and talking about a triple E; we want to talk about services provided by the government; multiculturalism; and then the uniqueness of provinces and regions. We say that although Quebec thinks they're unique, other provinces too, by the way, are unique in their economic resources, natural resources, the types of government they have, the relationships they have. Grant will now hit those with more detail.

Thank you.

MR. PISKO: Thanks, Ken. Mr. Chairman and ladies and gentlemen, before I start, I want to make it clear that the written presentation we sent to you on behalf of the employees of Monarch Communications and, in particular, two divisions here in Medicine Hat, broadcasting and cable – that the cross section of these employees were all volunteers. They represented both men and women. They were from management, secretarial staff, technical people, so they truly represented all walks of life.

I want to start by also indicating that what's been a surprise to all of us once we started this process was how common, really, were all the concerns that have been brought forward across the country, both with the Spicer commission and now with the report of the Alberta task force. We find that a lot of the issues that were discussed can refer to – at least two dozen issues that we started to discuss or that people brought forward as their concerns are really very, very common across the country. So what we did was to water these down, if you will, or consolidate them into at least five viewpoints or five overviews that we thought were most common and representative of those people's concerns. I'll start by providing you with a bit of an overview of what we think the consensus of that particular committee of our staff was.

We believe the aspirations of Albertans and Canadians to be simple and very straightforward, yet the rules required to achieve these aspirations will need to be changed, and the task is going to be huge. In short, we submit that we want fairness, prosperity, efficiency in government, a competitive nation, practical commonsense answers, the rights of all Canadians safeguarded, and national standards to be maintained where possible, while moving decision-making closer to the people.

This country requires leaders with vision to do the right things and managers to do them right. Common sense today seems to be at an all-time low because of a lack of clear objectives and goals. Management of the country has succumbed to dealing with critical issues, crisis issues, and ultimately crisis management.

One of the main issues that we talked about and we submitted to you is the national debt and taxation issue. I think this is probably the number one issue that came out from our staff. National opinion polls and recent public comment show Canadians everywhere are deeply concerned about public debt and the level of taxation that's required to support the ineffective social-democratic forms of government institutions and programs. Virtually every level of Canadian government today is scrambling to maintain existing programs without piling up

more debt. The time for lip service in regards to debt reduction and related tax increases has got to stop. We've got to mean collectively that we're serious about debt reduction. As a public, the taxpayer is sick and tired of an excessive tax burden with a plethora of income taxes at the federal and provincial levels – hidden taxes, surtaxes, now the GST – and the ongoing increases that go on each year in every category. We recommend, therefore, that consideration must be given to setting spending limits, including government borrowing, by law. All levels of government must be made to operate on a balanced budget, with financial restraints imposed.

With regard to the second issue, representative government, while the provinces already have a measure of control over their own provincial domestic affairs, it's at the national level in Ottawa where we feel the western provinces in particular have no muscle at all. The historical complaints of the Canadian west are exacerbated by the fact that Canada's Senate is an appointed, powerless chamber; thus, the western provinces don't even have minimal guarantees currently that could possibly be provided by an elected Senate. The existing structure, for example, leaves the door wide open for a repeat of the 1980 Liberal election whereby the Liberal Party formed a government in which not one member came from west of Winnipeg, creating political impotence for the region. The matter of Senate reform should continue to be pursued by the Alberta government in the interest of all Canadians. Finally, the political party system must be reconstructed to allow more free votes by elected representatives. Constituent consensus is more important than politics.

Another issue is with regard to services by government provided as close to people as possible. The larger the federal and to a certain degree provincial governments have become, the more removed, independent, faceless, and unresponsive the bureaucracies that manage these levels of government are. The myth is that government and government employees are public servants who seek to promote the good of people. The very size and power of government itself is influenced by expensive lobbying, public relations and media efforts of public employees fueled by taxpayer dollars. In many cases taxpayer dollars are used against broad citizen consensus and the taxpayer as a whole in an attempt to fund the political goals of a determined small group of the public. Power politics fueled by tax dollars and nurtured by welfare-state ideologies must become a thing of the past. It's interesting to note that Senator Olson alluded to this very, very point. He admitted that's the process. We all know that works. It's no longer appropriate. Our recommendation, therefore, is that the goal must be to maximize the cost/benefit of programs to the taxpayer through more effective and efficient use of public money.

With regard to multiculturalism, we made a few points here as well. It's becoming apparent that the economic reality of the future will drive immigration policy instead of social policy. For example, in a StatsCan report in 1989 it was stated that without immigration, continuation of Canada's below-replacement fertility rate would eventually lead to Canada's disappearance. With that slippage, so would any number of Canada's programs driven and administered by taxpayer dollars also be in jeopardy. For example, we did a little homework, and we discovered that according to Decima Research, between the years 1985 and '86, 65 percent of all immigration in the country, totaling over 1 million people, entered from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Almost 50 percent of those 1 million landed in Ontario, namely Toronto, 17 percent in Montreal, and 15 percent in Vancouver. We submit that it's already clear that immigration and the resulting multiculturalism policy currently dictated by the federal

government is already a regional issue and should therefore be administered as such. So our recommendation is: at best the federal system should set the rules of tolerance in co-operation with the provinces or regions. We feel that all every immigrant is looking for who has landed in Canada in the past and in the future is a more secure life. We don't require bureaucracies with large budgets to set quotas and tell minorities that they have a rich heritage. They already know that. What minorities need is tolerance.

11:09

Finally, with regard to the uniqueness of provinces and regions, we feel we should be recognized. We referred in our presentation to a book by Joel Garreau called *The Nine Nations of North America*, where he clearly outlined the nine nations, including Canada, and they run in a north and south direction as opposed to an east and west direction. For years we feel we've already artificially manufactured or packaged Canada into convenient regions for political and marketing reasons. Now the regions are maturing, and it's time to accept the growth within the regions and accept the variance in the makeup of the regions and allow greater flexibility and freedom to allow Canada to develop within the next stage of North America.

At the time of Confederation there weren't 3,000 people in all of Alberta, and in the next decade we're going to have 3 million. As certain as this growth is based upon the provinces' resources, it's equally important that certain political mechanisms to manage Alberta and its inhabitants will have to change. So we feel that Alberta, and perhaps in conjunction with British Columbia, has its own uniqueness with regard to resources, for example, and this should be allowed to develop. Our recommendation, therefore, is that mechanisms should be put in place to allow each province or each region to grow naturally, each in its own way, with the freedom of movement, languages, culture, without the aid of any socialist style of equalization at any federal or provincial level.

Finally, I'd just like to conclude by saying that our group felt that as we move further along into a period of intense self-introspection, we must continue to re-examine where we've been as a society, what we have become, and what we want to be. We urge the Alberta government to lead this philosophical debate on the requirement for change in the interests of all Canadians. We had a few children in here this morning. Perhaps our children may be willing to pay for some things that we as adults may not, and we'll have to take their comments into consideration as well.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I must say that you've done something unique as a communications company in terms of the broadcast of last evening, which I learned about today. We'll be very interested in observing what the response is, particularly in the telephone calls.

We have Yolande Gagnon.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you. I wanted to ask you about your point on equalization payments. If we are to have any kind of country at all, would you not see that – for instance, if they've had a very, very bad year in the maritimes, numbers of people unemployed – there should be some form of equalization, at least short term, to meet needs, or would you say absolutely never?

MR. PISKO: No. Never say never. I think common sense would have to prevail. The feeling of the group of people was that consistent or constant built-in programs which allow for that type of funding on a level basis, on an ongoing basis, becomes somewhat self-destructive to the economy and the good of all Canadians everywhere. So certainly not on a never basis.

DR. SAUER: Could I just add to that too, by the way? I think it's the way it's administered. For example, unemployment insurance administered in the maritimes should be quite different than B.C. In the maritimes – the fishing industry, for example – their boats there are not of the same calibre as those in B.C. and neither is their equipment, but unemployment insurance for the fishing industry in the maritimes is exactly the same as the man who owns a \$100,000 boat over in B.C. So you see what happens. You have to look at the needs and identify those. There'll have to be some adjustments based upon that but not equally administered and giving that person with a \$100,000 boat the same type of unemployment insurance payment as you would, say, a person in Newfoundland with a boat that is worth maybe \$7,000 and some of the equipment.

MRS. GAGNON: So you question that whole concept of universality. You don't treat everybody the same?

DR. SAUER: That is the basic part, that universality is not the best way to go.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Fred Bradley.

MR. BRADLEY: Thank you for your very enlightening presentation in terms of the process that you went about in coming to your position. You mentioned in your presentation that there should be national standards set, and then you say that decision-making should be moved to the jurisdiction closest to the people. That seems to be somewhat contradictory. Perhaps you could explain how you'd see these national standards being set and still meet this requirement: decision-making moved closer to the local level.

DR. SAUER: Let me make some initial comments, and then Grant will want to add to it, Mr. Bradley. I think if you were to look at legislation we have in place right now at the federal level, they do attempt to have standards, and then they write regulations to administer programs. For example, in the province of Alberta – I'm thinking now vis-à-vis secondary education, health – they'll pull back dollars if you have user fees and things like that. So we're suggesting that when you write legislation or put an Act into place, you have the Act that will cover the bases of the national foundation, and then when the regulations are put into place, you ask for provincial people or representatives to sit down with you and help you write those regulations so that they do reflect what we call the uniqueness of the region and/or of the province.

MR. PISKO: I might add that I'm sure most of you have seen that process work in other areas. I'm familiar with our own industry. For example, the cable television industry and the broadcasters recently established a Cable Television Standards Council, and this was designed and created exactly as Ken has described. It was designed and put together with the consensus of, of course, the cable industry, the regulator, and any number of interested groups, including the Consumers' Association. So

I think the same type of process could develop as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, thank you very much.

Oh, Pam Barrett. Sorry.

MS BARRETT: Yes. One more, a little bit complicated. You may not have discussed it, so I may be soliciting your personal opinions. We have had representation from the AUMA, from the mayor of Edmonton, and from other civic representatives indicating a desire to get real and include municipalities somehow in our constitutional framework as they now represent 80 percent of Canada's population. In your submission you suggest that services must be provided by government as close to the people as possible. I'll give you the three questions back to back to back. Does this mean municipalities, does it mean acknowledged in the Constitution, and would you then say that this also includes the ability to tax beyond the property and business tax restrictions?

DR. SAUER: I would just love that question, Mr. Chairman, but I'm not here today as an alderman. As a municipal official and as a past president of the AUMA I think it's fantastic that you would even allow us to make some comments on that. The important issue is this: when the Fathers of Confederation met in Charlottetown with the four provinces, at that particular time nobody realized that the provinces in the future would have the expertise that they have. Following that, of course, they said that municipalities were the children of the province, and I think that particular concept or notion must go. It seems to me that there is a role for the three levels of government and that there should be an opportunity to allow the municipalities to have an equal share in some of the things that are happening. I completely think, as we talked in our session, not from my point as an alderman but as the vice-president of corporate affairs for Monarch Communications, that services should be. In the olden days – and I use that very respectfully – in the '30s I understand that welfare, for example, was administered by the local municipality because they knew the needs.

MS BARRETT: If it was available.

DR. SAUER: If it was available. I think the whole thing that Grant made in the presentation here: the delivery of services should be as close to the people as possible. That's why I think when the other presenters today – and I'm sure you heard the same thing. If you're going to talk about health, health should be provincial because that's where it's best handled. It seems to me that having someone far away, a faceless bureaucrat trying to tell us what kind of hospital services we should have in Alberta is quite farfetched. I think there is the opportunity, and I do believe sincerely that municipalities need to be involved as a level of government. I wouldn't give them any other taxing power than they have now, because I think the property tax is there, but it's a regressive one. They should have some share, what I might call revenue sharing, if I can say it that way, of the income tax credits. There should be some way that there should be an opportunity for them to have moneys available through consultation with the provinces to provide services more efficiently and effectively at the local level.

11:19

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, both of you, for some very thoughtful comments and for the very thoughtful way you arrived at your presentation. I wish more people would do

that with their business and neighbour associates as they discuss the future of this country. Thank you very much. And thank you for the videotape. We will find that interesting, I'm sure.

DR. SAUER: We had hoped, by the way, to get more people off their chairs and out here. I hope that in some way or other they'll either write to you or do something.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good. We're open to hearing more as we move along.

I'd like to acknowledge a new arrival in the audience as well, our colleague Al Hyland, the member of the Legislature for Cypress-Redcliff. Welcome, Al. We're glad to have you join us to listen in. One of your constituents is next: Barney Gogolinski.

MR. GOGOLINSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the task force. I have no formal brief made up. I just came here this morning. I had a few thoughts that I had written down during the morning before I got here, and I would just like to mention them. As an interested citizen I've been following your task force, and I also took part in the Spicer commission when he was around, so I'm really interested in Canada and the Constitution.

Several things have been mentioned this morning by Senator Olson. I really did agree with some of his remarks. I guess maybe it's the age group that we're in. We remember just the way we've been treated. We've had a pretty good life, and we're quite satisfied with it, and I guess maybe we want to stay with the status quo. I was really interested in Senator Olson's remarks.

Really there are several concerns that I have personally, but I believe the main one is the unity of Canada. I like to refer to the provinces of Canada as a family. I think you all are family people, and you know that if you have harmony in the family, then you can go somewhere; you can be successful. But if there's not harmony in the family, then I don't think you can be very successful. This is what I think we have to work on first.

We've heard many comments of how Quebec should be treated. It isn't only Quebec. I'm also interested in our native people. I thought the native people were taken care of with Treaty 7 and all this, but the way things have developed in the last several years, I guess maybe the native people weren't. I haven't studied up on it, and I don't know, but I'm really interested. I'm just wondering if they have been treated fairly. These are two of the things that I think we should deal with: to try and get the family in harmony, the people of Canada and the native people included. Let's treat them in a fair way.

Let's start everybody on an equal basis, just as Senator Olson mentioned. We're all Canadians, and I think we should be treated equally. We all should be brought up under the same rules and laws. That's the way the family is. If you have a family member that doesn't want to obey the rules in the home, who doesn't like it, what does he do? He walks out, and possibly nine times out of 10 in a few years' time he comes home, and he obeys the laws of the family, and we have harmony again.

I don't know if this is the way. I know Mrs. Smith has mentioned that this isn't the way Quebec should be treated. From all the things I've heard this morning, nobody actually has come up with a real solution. We hear our own Premier, Premier Getty, say that we've got to keep Quebec in Canada, but he never comes up and says in what way. Do we give Canada away to them or what? What are their demands? I

think we heard this morning that the rest of the people, the Anglophones know maybe how Quebec should be treated, but they won't say themselves what they want. These are some of the things that I think should be settled. We want harmony in the country. Then the economics are very serious, and a lot of people bring that up, but I think we've got to have harmony first, and then everything will fall in line. I believe we're all equal, and these are the rules that all Canadians should follow. That's what I feel should be done.

Now, there shouldn't be any special status for anybody, any ethnic group coming in, just like we had with the turban deal. It just brings on more disunity in the community. We have no doubt that it came from the Quebec issue too, the turban deal. They figured, "Well, here's an opportunity for us to get something." Then there are going to be others that want the same type of treatment. The way the Japanese issue was handled here a few years ago during the war. I don't think this actually is right, because there are going to be other people who are going to come in and feel that these people were treated this way. I feel this was a circumstance of the war. I don't think there should be any special treatment for anybody. You know, these are some of the things. But the native issue and the Quebec issue are two of my greatest concerns at the present time.

In forming the new Constitution or when we go to get at it again, there are three things. Two of them have been mentioned here this morning, one by Senator Olson, and the Monarch people have just mentioned the other one. Those are the ones I have down here: equality, fairness, and common sense. These are the three guidelines that I feel should be used when we're drawing up the Constitution. Along with that, at the end we need co-operation. That's the fourth. That pretty well summarizes the three of them. We need co-operation by everybody concerned to make these three things come into being. Among our provincial and federal leaders in Canada, as far as I'm concerned, the one person who comes closest to these guidelines, I feel, at the present time is Clyde Wells. He's the only one that I feel has come close to any of these guidelines.

As far as our economy is concerned and our deficit and all that, you know, it's all hindsight right at the present time. I think we all know, we've heard it before, that our costs are too high. I think in the late '70s and '80s times were just too good. Everybody just had too much money and the demands of the people were just too much. The government just spent money and set up different departments which maybe aren't needed at the present time. No matter what, if you get some privileges, it's sure hard to cut back on them, and this is what they do. Look at the oil companies and everybody. They just had too much money, and everybody was spoiled. Now when things tighten up, what's happening? It's hard to cut back, and it's hard for us to lower our standards. The same with our labour and wages and productivity and all that. We've priced ourselves out of a lot of business in Canada on account of, I guess, just the way we carry on, our labour costs and things like that.

11:29

Well, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you very much for this opportunity. I could go on, but you've heard all these arguments, all these things, before. I just wanted to take part in this thing if my grandchildren say, "Where were you May 31, 1991, when we had the hearing in Medicine Hat?" Actually, I think it's a date that's going to be remembered, and I feel that I want to be part of it. That's my feeling.

For me, I served my country in the Second World War in the army, and the country has treated me very well. I just want to say in closing that I hope it carries on this way.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Barney. Perhaps all of us can appreciate very much your grave concern for the future and the unity of the country. That's why we're here. Part of the process, of course, is to determine how Alberta can best sit down eventually with our other partners in Confederation, in the federal state, and with the federal government to see how to keep the country together. That's why we're here. We thank you for your thoughtful presentation.

Bob Hawkesworth has a question for you.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Gogolinski, for coming today. I think your grandchildren could be proud of you for making the effort to be here and speaking your mind.

The presentations we heard just before yours from Monarch Communications and Mrs. Smith expressed some sympathy for the idea that in order to keep the country together, we should be strengthening the provinces with various powers and, I suppose in some ways, removing the federal government's presence in some of these programs and some of these areas. Do you have some sympathy for us going in that direction as sort of the price or the way we need to respond to Quebec? Do you agree with that sort of sentiment that we should be decentralizing our powers more to the provincial level?

MR. GOGOLINSKI: Really, no. I feel we should have a strong federal government. You mentioned Quebec. As far as Quebec is concerned, I feel they have sovereignty. Personally, I feel they have sovereignty right today, because they pretty well have more control over themselves than we have. They only want more. I think they're weakening the federal government. I can't see that we'd decentralize any more than we have.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you generally satisfied with the division of responsibilities between the federal government and the provinces?

MR. GOGOLINSKI: In most cases, yes. I didn't give it that much thought. There may be some particular areas where the provinces could have a little more control, but generally speaking, I don't think so. I'm of the old mold. I've been treated quite well. Going from the horse and buggy days to the space age, you know, is quite a jump in a lifetime, and I've enjoyed that. I just can't see how things could be much better.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Barney.

That's an appropriate note on which to conclude this morning's hearings. We're going to take a one-hour break now for lunch. We'll be resuming at 12:30. It appears we now have presentations, which will start right at 12:30 and go until 2:30. If there's anybody who is not on the list who wishes to comment at 2:30, we can accept brief presentations at that time.

We'd like to thank you all for coming and the presenters for their thoughtful participation today.

[The committee adjourned at 11:33 a.m.]