

9:15 a.m.

Thursday, September 12, 1991

[Chairman: Mr. Horsman]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, my apologies for being somewhat late this morning, but I got tied up unavoidably.

I'd like to commence this morning's activities. This is one of the panels of the Alberta Select Special Committee on Constitutional Reform. We are into our second phase of public hearings, having been here and throughout the province in late May and early June. At that time we found that there was a long waiting list of people who wished to come forward and give us advice on the future of Alberta and Canada, so we determined that we would hold two additional sets of hearings to accommodate the people on the waiting list and anybody who indicated by the end of July that they wanted to appear before us. We have a full day in Calgary, and again tomorrow we will be back here as well.

I'm Jim Horsman. I'm the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Medicine Hat, and I'm the chairman of the select committee. I'd like my colleagues to just briefly introduce themselves.

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

MR. CHIVERS: Barrie Chivers, MLA, Edmonton-Strathcona.

MRS. GAGNON: Yolande Gagnon, Calgary-McKnight.

MS BETKOWSKI: Nancy Betkowski, MLA, Edmonton-Glenora.

MR. ANDERSON: Dennis Anderson, MLA, Calgary-Currie.

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

MR. SEVERTSON: Gary Severtson, MLA, Innisfail.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'd like now to call Robert Wolf to come forward. As you're coming forward, I just want to indicate that we hope people can conclude their remarks and answer any questions within a 15-minute period. We try to be a little more flexible than that, but we do have a good number of presenters this morning, and I'm hopeful we'll be able to hear them all thoroughly.

Welcome.

MR. WOLF: Thank you. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before your committee. I'd like to not take you all through the things that I've submitted to you. This is my main item that I'd like to bring to your attention. I'd like to speak to a few of the matters that I've outlined there in some degree of their importance.

I'm a geologist, a biologist. I'm somewhat of native origin. I have been fortunate enough to travel very, very widely. I've lived in China; I've worked in the United States. I regard the place we live, here, as a paradise that is getting subjected to some flaws and problems. I mention that in my brief here.

I would particularly like to emphasize that I feel natives need better treatment in constitutional reform and in every aspect of our lives. I think they're widely subjected to environmental racism, where projects and things are decided without their input and are plunked down in their midst with little or no regard to

their claims, their life-style, and the things that have gone before. Amnesty International describes Canada's genocidal treatment of natives as barbaric. I think we even saw letters from Switzerland the other day about the treatment of natives in Alberta, but it's widespread in Canada.

I could make representations here on behalf of civil liberties organizations that I belong to, or nature groups, or the industry that I still work in, but as a citizen I'm much more concerned about the things I've listed here. Among those that are really seriously lacking both at national and provincial levels is the matter of freedom of information, which really is very unfortunate both in Alberta and on the national scene. Many of the things I have to say here deal with the secrecy and the lack of glasnost and perestroika at both the provincial and the federal levels.

I included in my material a letter I wrote to Premier McKenna regarding a form of rewarded proportional representation. There are a lot of forms of that around the world, and we sorely need it in Alberta and Canada where we have a government that's in there by a 43 percent vote, is doing all sorts of things beyond its mandate, which is outdated at best in terms of the things that are being done that are very unpopular. Really we need a form of voting that would give, say, a party that had 55 percent of the vote perhaps at least 50 percent of the seats and something that scales down against parties and candidates with less votes. Where we have a government like McKenna's or some we've had here in Alberta, it's really twisted out of shape. It doesn't work properly. It's very undemocratic.

I had a reply from various people to my letter. Deborah Coyne replied to me. Gary Filmon replied. Mr. Hawkesworth replied. I've scattered the copies quite widely. I got a reply from Mrs. Lobregt; I've had a lot of replies from Mrs. Lobregt. I usually do not get a reply from the people that are at the top; I get these letters saying: I'm the secretary, and I've brought this to so-and-so's attention. I don't think that works well enough for citizen participation.

I feel we need impeachment. We need recall. We need plebiscites, referenda, and initiatives. I feel we have a very outdated voting system that goes back hundreds of years and doesn't reflect today's situation where a lot of the matters that are before government could be at least polled with the people electronically. It's simply not good enough to do some of the things that are done without more reference to the voters. We particularly need an immigration debate. I think Canada is saturating us with immigration at the rate of 250,000 a year while ignoring the jobless that are here. I think polls show us that 70 percent of the people feel that this matter is right out of control. We need class action, judicial access to government and to the courts. I would say Canada is behind other jurisdictions on a lot of matters.

We need to be giving consideration to a steady state economy instead of the boom and bust thing that we are saddled with so often where it fluctuates wildly. It is a thing that, I believe, could be rectified by commencing job sharing. In the case of the company that I'm associated with, I think we would be happy to see a system that brought us people when there's a lot of unemployment on some basis where we could train them. If we encountered boom times, we would want to keep some of them. I think it's a very primitive system to throw people away as we do and then put them on unemployment insurance or welfare instead of having a mixed economy that really takes care of people a lot better than is going on now.

I feel that I want to see a very strong, nationalist central government. I don't want to see provinces grabbing sectors of

the decision-making and playing off one against another and actually further abusing environmental concerns and perhaps alienating provinces more to split up the country. I think that we're very saddled with captive agencies. I mention them here in one way. Like the NEB, the ERCB, and the NRCB so many of our agencies are captive to the industry they regulate. I've spent months in some hearings, many years overall. I've never won a thing in going to these things, because they really are captive to the industry they regulate. We see the NEB coming out here and saying they need another 155 employees. All they need to do is send out the rubber stamp and get a clerk to wield it, because they do not deal with these matters in a sense that deals with the public interest. They deal with it in an industry way, and our own agencies here in Alberta are doing the same thing to us. I've appeared before them in many instances, and whether it's something like cost/benefit, it's phoney; if it's environmental assessment, it's phoney. I would say that prostitute agencies or consultants come in and their material is accepted on behalf of industry, and the public is really out of the picture.

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I feel that we're really living in a paradise here, and it becomes more apparent to people the more you see of the world. I feel that the preservation of the quality of life that we have here is an extremely high priority for a government to be considering. Essentially we're saddled with a lot of what I would call mindless growth dedication. It's just not good enough for the future, it seems to me.

I follow the jurisdictions in the United States about some regulatory things that go on there, and I would say that I feel Louisiana is ahead of many of the provinces and Alberta. I regard Louisiana as one of the worst, most corrupt states, yet they have advances that are really ones our government should be considering, particularly in environmental matters. I feel that there are examples in the United States, as in Alaska where things are considered prior to the leases and the mining claims being granted. We're seeing a lot of abuse in this area, and there's no way for the public to get at these matters. I think we'll be seeing use of article 7 of the Charter of Rights here one of these days, because people are going to be so fed up with the lack of access to decision-making processes on matters like natives, like environmental concerns. It simply is not democratic; it's not good enough.

I think that Alberta should be in the lead in doing these things locally and pressing them on the federal government. I do not want to see more power to the provinces; I think we're seeing an abuse of that whether it's Quebec or various provinces. I think we need to keep our country together and to watch out for U.S. domination, and that's what a lot of the moves that have been made are leading to. There's a lot of things that simply aren't as good down there as we have here, and we need to make recognition of that.

I think our tax system has gone from – I understand that in 1955 industry paid 50 percent of the tax and the citizens paid 50 percent. Presently it's 85 for the citizens and 15 for industry. We hear a lot about saving money and the cost of supporting medicare and things of that sort. Our loan guarantees and subsidies and giveaways to corporations are far out of line in terms of economy; that's on a provincial and national scale.

We sorely need to have more open government. We see restructuring in the former Communist countries, and there's talk of glasnost and perestroika. It's needed here. We need

more openness, and we need a lot of restructuring that makes the decision-making process open to citizens.

I don't think there's anything else too much that I'd like to emphasize at this time. I've left you with my letter to Premier McKenna about some form of rewarded proportionate representation. I think that parties in power tend to lose sometimes and lose totally, yet the people that have supported them, maybe 40 percent of the people, can totally lose out in their representation. This is a system that I say demands reform.

I'd be happy to answer any questions that you might have of my submission.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Bob Hawkesworth, Yolande Gagnon, Dennis.

**MR. HAWKESWORTH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your presentation, Mr. Wolf. I agree with you; we need glasnost and perestroika in Canada. But when we see what the results were in Russia, I don't know whether there is any government here in Canada that would embrace it if they think the same might happen. I say that facetiously.

You made a comment about proportional representation. I can see your point about the unfairness with the current system when large numbers of voters aren't represented in the Legislature or the House of Commons as a result of the way a first past the post system works, but on the other hand, proportional representation often ends up in minority governments, which – at least our experience has tended to be in the past – are unstable and have short spans in terms of their terms. Do you see the trade-off of fairness for, I suppose to grossly term it, instability as a fair one, or is there something inherently better about proportional representation and minority governments to serve the people better?

**MR. WOLF:** I haven't really advocated proportional representation; I say "rewarded proportional representation" where the group that gets a considerable edge is rewarded for having that edge, and that would eliminate, I feel, the complaint that you make. However, I would say that the best government we ever have in Alberta or Canada or anyplace would be minority government, because that's when they're a little bit closer to the people. They realize that they'd better reflect the fact that they do not have an overpowering way to dictate between elections. I feel that really what we suffer here is dictatorship between elections. That's what I'm talking about. Whether it's class action, freedom of information, captive agencies, you simply cannot get at the process as a citizen between elections. I don't advocate proportional representation. I think it has to be a rewarded system.

**MR. HAWKESWORTH:** Some of the Albertans who appeared before our committee in other centres and here in Calgary have advocated changes such as recall, the right to initiatives, and greater use of referendums to achieve that objective. Why would you suggest perhaps rewarded proportional representation as a structural change as opposed to some of those other suggestions that have been made to us?

**MR. WOLF:** I think all of those things that I have mentioned, like recall, plebiscites, are democratic concepts, and they're in use elsewhere. When you see ballots in some of the jurisdictions, they have a wide range of things that people can decide on directly, and I feel that's all to the good. So I don't see that the

fact you might have recall would necessarily offset the need for rewarded proportional representation.

My member, for whom I used to vote enthusiastically, was Mr. Klein. I just feel that he's become unreachable. He's doing a lot of things that are of the Ken Kowalski type, and I would like to be able to get at him for that.

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MR. CHAIRMAN: Yolande.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you. I'd like to follow up on that. I think what we have now in Canada has become a bit of a hybrid between the British parliamentary system and the American system. If we go further with recall, referenda/initiative, plebiscites, and so on, we will be further along in this hybrid. So would you suggest that we just drop the British parliamentary system and adopt the American system totally? That has been advocated by some people, rather than trying to make this present marriage work or maybe one where we have even more of a hybrid work.

MR. WOLF: Well, I think quite often we mimic the worst things that go on in the United States and reject some of the better ones. I don't favour the United States in many ways, but I think that if they have elements of their system that could democratize ours, I would favour that and not worry too much about whether it goes on honouring the antiquated system we're using.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dennis.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My first question follows on those asked by Bob and Yolande, really, with respect to rewarded proportional representation. Is my understanding of it right? Is it a system where the votes are calculated on the basis of a series of choices and then the reward dimension would be a party being able to add a number of seats as a result of being the party with the greatest number of votes?

MR. WOLF: I agree that there are many different forms of proportional representation. I think it would take a real wise set of studies and hearings to devise one that was suitable. I think if it is rewarded so that the majority party, whether it's in votes or in seats, gets a proper representation for the fact that most people voted for them, it would improve our system.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Wolf, do you not think there's a conflict between that concept and your last point on the page, the weakening of party control? At least most systems of proportional representation I've seen, and particularly, I think, with this reward dimension, allow parties a greater control over that electoral system because they have choices of those individuals on a party basis as opposed to an individual constituency basis. It would seem to me that you're strengthening the party system and, therefore, the party's control once you enter a Parliament or Legislature.

MR. WOLF: Well, that could easily be a flaw in my concept. I like to see the member answerable to his constituents the most. This last stuff I have here is sort of a family item, and we were mixed up about how we wanted to express that. I don't think

I've expressed it very well, but I do like to see freedom from party discipline in our government.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Wolf. We appreciate you coming forward and giving us your views.

Ruben Nelson is next. Morning.

MR. NELSON: Good morning. Thank you for doing this. You have my sympathy and respect. I kind of have a feeling that it's like a dance card at an old-fashioned formal, that you kind of go from one partner to the next and try to keep track of who you're with and what the music is playing.

MS BETKOWSKI: Speak for yourself.

MR. NELSON: For the moment I'm your date.

Let me walk you through these notes and then make a few more comments at the end. Essentially what I want to do this morning is share with you or outline a way of thinking about the conundrum that we're in in Canada now, kind of where we are, how we got here, and how we might get out of it, that I think differs at least in part with the normal ways we're going about it. That's not to condemn the normal ways, but it is to say that sometimes when you're stuck, the ways you're trying to do things don't get you where you want to go.

This comes out of my life. I'm a bit of a strange bird. As you know, I've lived most of my adult life as a futurist, thinking about the forces of change and where they may take us and what we might do with all of that. Accordingly, what I've come to understand is that the really hard part of taking change in the future seriously and kind of coming to terms with that is that things begin to happen which take us outside the frames of reference that we're used to. This is not a new thought in our culture, as I suggest in my notes here. It's like the old joke that ends up: well, if I was going to go there, I wouldn't start from here on this road. We kind of know that, yet in fact to learn to do it together is difficult. That's not to condemn anything; it's just to acknowledge that. That's really the hardest part of doing that, yet it seems to me it applies to Canada right now. I've also decided that given the 15 minutes, this is possibly a helpful thing to do. At least it will provide a break for you from the other kinds of things.

The first proposition is that my own sense is that Canada is in a crisis now. It's not that if we misbehave, we'll get into one, that if we don't do a deal with Quebec, we'll get into one. We're in one. Therefore, any talk that says if only we would do thus and so, whatever the thus and so is, to avoid a crisis is beside the point. I'm going to talk later about what I think the nature of that crisis is.

I want to suggest further that we've not bottomed out yet, that it's going to get a lot nastier before it gets better, that any thought that we can kind of magically do this round and meet Quebec's needs and that'll be the end of it I think is an illusion. I don't think there's a ghost of a chance of that. Therefore, to help create the expectation that that's the case - that if only Canadians would kind of behave and follow the lead of their leaders, then we can avoid a crisis and be good people - I think is setting us up for failure. Because when that doesn't happen, as when Meech Lake collapsed . . . You remember the psychological environment around Meech Lake, which was incredibly nasty. It took courage for Canadians to look most of their

leaders straight in the eye and spit in it. But that's because the leaders set themselves up for failure; it's not because Canadians misbehaved.

The same dynamic is going on now, so I think we need to help Canadians expect that no matter what happens, this isn't the end of it. My own 10-cent prediction will be that in fact this round will fail, as did the last. That's not because of – that's not an accusation of anybody. I just don't think there's a way. I think what we're into is so much deeper than where the discussion is that we won't be able to settle it with this kind of a round. On the other hand, I think the fact of crisis, if you're willing to explore it, not avoid it but explore it, and to go into it and face it, is an incredible opportunity for new health to come out of it.

I don't want to despise the fact that crises are painful and frightening. I mean, I speak as one who had a heart attack some years ago. It scared the hell out of my wife. It's one of the few occasions she's ever been drunk, as she flew across Canada wondering if she was coming to a funeral or what. Then if she found me alive, she was going to kill me. If you talk to David Crombie about his heart attack, if you talk to people who have survived divorces and used them creatively, it's not that you'd sell them door to door to your neighbours, but in a funny kind of way they put you on a new road that you couldn't have got to without it. You talk to people about the most important stuff they learn in a life and almost invariably it comes out of deep, deep pain.

The strategy of having Canadians avoid the crisis rather than go into it, which has been a 30-year strategy in Canada, I think is just not on. I want to reinforce what seems to me to be the insight of the Hebrew-Christian tradition, of psychotherapeutic tradition, of virtually every major spiritual tradition on the planet: that in fact out of death can come resurrection, but you don't get to Easter without Good Friday. Basically, we've had a 30-year conspiracy in Canada. I don't mean it in a nasty sense, but to avoid Good Friday yet to promise us life I don't think is on. I think we've got to face up to that.

It follows that we need leaders in all areas of life in Canada, not just political – I mean, this needs to be in every area – who understand this dynamic out of their own life, precisely because for so long we've tried to avoid the hard stuff and hoped that we can paper over it and then get on with things. I say that not as an accusation but just phenomenological description. I find it understandable, for example, that Francophones, particularly those in Quebec, would threaten the rest of us with a crisis if we don't accept their demands and meet their deadlines. This is not an unknown tactic in any human relationship. This isn't something that Francophones invented and the rest of us don't know.

What I decry is the fact that for 30 years most English-speaking leaders, particularly those with a formal leadership capability, have in fact encouraged the rest of us to go along with this, to avoid the crisis rather than be willing to face it and then say, "Well, it may break up, but if that's the case, then let's face it and work it through." Rather, we've been told that it's unthinkable, that Canada without Quebec is nothing, that Canada without Quebec is just an America. Anybody who knows Canada knows that's a crock, but it's been said by every Prime Minister since Mike Pearson, including the present one. It's been said routinely by Premiers and by other leaders. It's still said in Canada, and the fact is we've reinforced the very malady we're trying to avoid. In short, what we need are leaders who are secure enough in themselves to help us follow a road that would in fact heal us.

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Now, if we're going to do that, then I think we've got to understand the nature of the crisis we're in. I don't think it's a crisis of profitable federalism or overlap of jurisdictions – not that those aren't issues – or even of Quebec. I think the deepest crisis – and I think my sense is that this conversation is beginning to emerge in Canada but won't be settled by the time we attempt to fix this stuff up – is in fact the crisis of the strength of our belief in Canada as a project that's an ongoing effort. What we've done inadvertently in trying to deal with the crisis by avoiding it is to erode the very possibility of a belief in Canada that most of us in this room, particularly if we grew up on the prairies, grew up with so intuitively that we just took it for granted. In other words, we have no story of Canada within which we can locate ourselves and live that's both believable and reliable. There isn't a story that everybody believes: Francophones, native people, so-called ethnics, Anglophones, whatever. We have no answer to the question that's both our own question now as well as that of our children: what is Canada most deeply about? We tend to answer that it's a place that pays medicare – that's what defines Canada – and it's a place where we now stay out of each other's lives, that in fact you can kind of do what you want here.

The symptoms of this lack of mythology within which we live can be seen in our elevation of tolerance to the ultimate value. Now, I'm not against tolerance, but it's not an ultimate value. You can't deal with every situation on the planet with tolerance, and we're trying to do that in Canada. The mindless assertion of our mosaic against the American melting pot has become a chant in Canada. We have pom-pom rallies for it without thinking it through and what it means. Our equally mindless defence of multiculturalism, which isn't to say that it's all bad, but the way that it's been enacted and the way that bilingualism has created separate but equal ghettos in the very country that decries apartheid in South Africa – I mean, there are some wonderful ironies in our behaviour. So by lacking a story that includes us all, which is clearly one of the things natives as well as others are saying, what we've done is try to justify the creation of a country in which each could just have our own way and assume that we can stay together. It seems to me that's not on. What we'll end up with is a country that technically is whole but to which no one feels a commitment, and that's the path we're headed on.

The trouble with this strategy – and I would remind you that it has in fact been the chosen strategy of the last generation of national leaders in Canada, and it's still the official doctrine within which we work – is that it erodes the very fabric of the country it claims to enhance. If we continue down this path, we'll travel it until the last one of us reluctantly decides that in fact it's not worth the effort to remain Canadian. If so, we die at our own hands. True, our death will be unintentional, but of course that's the essential nature of tragedy, that the death is not intended but comes out of the failure of the characters.

Canada has always been an unnatural country, an act of will and an act of faith, and if we are to continue, we need good reasons to continue the commitment of faith that is essential to Canada continuing. There is mounting evidence, I think, of the fact that this is being intuitively recognized by Canadians, at least outside Quebec. Consider the rejection of Meech Lake in this light. It's not the only strand, but it's one of the strands there. Consider much of the evidence before the Spicer commission; it can at least be read this way. The call for a strong federal government can be read this way. The rise of the Reform Party, at least in part, supports this view. The demand

of Albertans to Quebeckers that they need to tell us clearly whether or not they're interested in contributing to a common venture can be read this way. To use the title of Rollo May's new book, Canadians are beginning to give voice to "a cry for myth" and not just for administrative arrangements. I suggest to you the anger that many Canadians feel, that you folks would know more about than I because they've presented it here and dumped it on your laps if not on your heads, can also be read this way.

In my view, then, the overriding task we face is not "to reach an accommodation with Quebec." It's not that I despise that task, but that isn't what's at the heart of the matter. What's at the heart of the matter is to articulate a story of Canada, a story of Canada as a societal project that is and has been and will be. Once this story is visible to us, what we should then be able to do is work out the arrangements of our lives, and those arrangements, I argue, will become clearer. To settle the arrangements on the basis of the story now in vogue is to ultimately ensure the death of the country, even though for a short term we celebrate the fact that we've got an agreement on the arrangements. That, of course, is what I think we're about to try to do.

Now, let me just say a word about alternative stories of Canada so you get a better sense of that. I suggest to you that so far we have tried two and that we find them both failing. The first one we tried is literally caught in the British Act that defined this country initially, and that's the British North America Act. It says everything you need to know about Canada: we are that part of the new world that is essentially British, and the fact is, we're basically British. That's the mythology that one grew up with here on the prairies, that one could come from anywhere to an English-speaking place that was essentially British. Now, granted, it left out native people, it left out Francophones in time, but it basically was a story that worked for a hundred years and was remarkably stable. Over the last 30 years that story has fallen into disrepute. In fact, it's actively been torn down in all kinds of ways, essentially by the leaders of the country, largely out of the pressure of Quebec because Quebeckers couldn't find themselves within that story. Native people also have said, "Well, me too; I can't find myself there," but we tended to ignore them at that point.

So we tried another possibility. We set aside the first story of our country as a country and said, "Let's try another story." I'll just remind you that the first story can be seen as essentially the Ontario version of Canada. It's the version that these folks are most intuitively comfortable with. Ontario to this day says, "We're the only province that really is Canadian." As the billboards used to say, "Buy Canadian; keep Ontario working," in the sense that Ontario is the whole country. There was truth to that in the early years. We tend to resent it, but that's another story.

The second story we tried is essentially the Quebec version of Canada, that we are and have been from the beginning a country of two founding nations. Other people elbowed into that, so not being able to sell bilingualism and biculturalism, we sold bilingualism and multiculturalism. I was there as a little bureaucrat in the Secretary of State when that was invented, so I know that story fairly intimately, and that's the story essentially we've been trying to sell over the last 30 years. Again it left native people out, and what's more, it left a whole bunch of Anglophones uneasy. Now, we tended to say that if you felt uneasy, it's just because you're racist and a bigot, and since we weren't that, most of us shut up.

What I suggest you're seeing is the scab being pulled off that wound and saying, "Look, that story doesn't work any better than

the first one." What you're seeing is the collapse of that story in spite of the fact that the attempt that's being made right now is to make that story work; the arrangements that Joe Clark is working so hard on are in fact an attempt to save that version of the story. I suggest to you that it's got no more chance than we have a chance of going back to a basically-British story, and I think for good reasons, nor would I in any sense support it. I think it's not a story worth supporting, because I think if we commit ourselves to it, we're going to lose the country anyway, so why the hell would you do that?

I think there is another possibility, and ironically it comes essentially out of – maybe it's the turn of the prairies, because it's essentially our experience. I'd remind you that the settling of the prairies was the first time in Canadian history that basically people came to Canada from all over the world, speaking different languages, deliberately leaving what they knew at home to create a new life here for themselves, for their kids. That was not true of Francophones in Quebec. It was not true of people in the British tradition all through the settling of English Canada, what we think of as Atlantic and Ontario. But, in fact, that's what we did here. We knew that we were trying to create a new life for ourselves, where anybody could come, and it didn't matter where you were from or how recently you'd come. We were playing in some sense a common game that acknowledged differences, yet there was a common mythology.

I suggest to you that what we did on the prairies is model a story that is now necessary for the whole of the country. If in some sense in Canada we're not doing something that includes all of us, then there are good reasons for none of us to play; we should just turn and go our own ways. Now, it seems to me if we can work out that story, then the arrangements for it – that is, the question of the so-called division of powers, all the kinds of things that mostly you've been hearing about and will continue to hear about. Again, it's not that I despise that, it's not that I don't have views on these things, but I think this way of thinking about it is so fundamental that it needs to be front and centre so that the arrangements follow an understanding of what it is we're trying to do here, because otherwise we get the cart before the horse and we'll fail.

I haven't had time as yet to write out in any detail the elements of these stories, at least for your consumption, although I will in the next few weeks, as well as some comments on what those arrangements might be, because there is a logic behind it. There is a place one can go with it. I apologize for not having done that yet.

On the other hand, we've only got 15 minutes to dance, and that's probably enough of a plateful. So I will be quiet and let you get at me and hold me accountable.

9:55

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Thank you very much, Ruben. That was a very interesting analysis and something we haven't heard put before us in quite that way. As we are groping our way through the presentations, it's helpful to take the more philosophical, overall look that you've just given to us.

Questions or comments? Yes, Fred.

**MR. BRADLEY:** Do you have any preliminary views as to how your story will unfold and what arrangements might be in it in a constitutional sense?

**MR. NELSON:** Yeah. My short-run scenario is, as I say, that the present arrangements will fail. We will be threatened with all kinds of crises and whatnot, but through that we'll be

tempered enough to basically decide: do we want to be Canadian? We'll discover that in fact we want to. I think my prediction will be that although we'll march right up to the brink and it will be nasty as all get out – as any therapist tells you, as long as a couple is still yelling at each other, they're engaged. I don't mean that lightly. I take a kind of therapist's eye on this, although it's not my formal training. I think even Quebec will discover that a lot of the talk is kind of like brave adolescent talk that we can move out from the house but still be on an allowance. It's absolutely clear that we'll just come down like a tonne of bricks if that's not on. You know, if you're going to leave them, let's really get serious about negotiations here. I think we'll go through that process but discover that in fact there's something that we're about.

So I think that will be the dynamic. It will take multiple years. I think in the process we'll throw off many of the leaders who now lead us, because emotionally and psychologically they're not up to this. Whether the next set will be much better one can argue and it's kind of iffy, but I think they'll be replaced. In the hope that at least they are, we'll turn to people who are emotionally secure rather than insecure. Emotional security has not been the mark of many former Canadian leaders.

I think the content will be that we'll use this as a time as well to think more deeply and to think about the frame we're in and think about arrangements that rather than just reinventing an industrial country . . . And I'll remind you that Canada is quintessentially, as is the U.S., an industrial society, not in the sense that we make things but in the sense of the time and history when we were born. We'll think about fresh ways of doing things. One of the things we have as Canadians is an incredible capacity to invent new institutions at the time we need them if we give ourselves that freedom. From the invention of our country to the CBC in earlier times, the Bank of Canada – I'm not arguing that all these things work now, but the fact is that we have that capacity and it's part of our tradition. I think we'll come through this again as we work our way through it. The thing we won't be able to do is do it quickly and hurriedly. I mean, it's going to be a pain and a drag for all of us for most of the decade.

MR. BRADLEY: So you're basically recommending therapy.

MR. NELSON: Yeah, that's right. It's difficult, because a family can go to an external person called a therapist who can work with them and help interpret one to the other. We have to do self-therapy. But I would remind you that self-therapy is a growing movement. It's like any other self-help group; there are techniques with it. It's what Spicer could have done had he himself been secure enough to do that, because one of the rules of therapy is that everything can be said. It doesn't mean that it's all valid, but it can be said. Of course, what Spicer did is what we've had in Canada for 30 years: no, you can't say that here, because to say it, you're a bigot. If that's the environment you're in, then in fact you can't ever get clean about what's going on. You can't hold people accountable for what they're saying.

So, yes, in that sense I would say that what we need are people who are secure enough to lead us, who understand that if you go through a crisis, you can in fact come out of it healthier. The price you have to pay is that you've got to go through it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ruben, we're certainly hearing everything being said about the country, from people who say we need just

one government, Ottawa, to people who tell us they want separate countries; you know, the separatist concept. We'll hear that tomorrow from Mr. Parizeau, I daresay. These are things we are struggling with, and between those two points there's obviously a lot of ground.

In any event, Barrie Chivers and then Nancy.

MR. CHIVERS: A fascinating and interesting discussion, Ruben. What I'm wondering about is a bit more in terms of process. We've had a number of suggestions made to us of the type of process that should be utilized in order to achieve constitutional reform. In keeping with your views – you described basically the first part of our tradition, a view of society which was basically or fundamentally British and then the two founding nations experiment – we have to go somewhere else. I think it seems clear to all of us that we have to go somewhere else. The question is: how do we get there? It seems to me that process may well be as important as product. I'm wondering what your views are on the suggestions for a constituent assembly and whether or not that would fall within the parameters of the type of therapy you think we need to engage in.

MR. NELSON: I think as a mechanism it's conceivable that it could be set up in ways that help heal; it could be set up in ways that help destroy us. That really depends on intent and framing. In other words, one could see a constituent assembly as further finesse – and I don't mean that just cheaply – that is designed to not break the surface tension of the relationships we have in Canada and not be able to get honest with each other, which is a terribly messy process. One could also see it designed in a way that would do that. Part of that would have to do with how long you think it will take. My own sense is that you measure this in years. This is something that we in Canada need literally years to work through. Therefore, one of the things I would argue is that whatever arrangements we come to should be for now. I think Meech Lake would have passed had we said: "This is a 10-year deal. If in 10 years we don't actively confirm it, it dies." I think if Joe can come to some arrangements now, fine, but make it a 10-year deal so it lets us continue the discussion but without the threat of death and destruction if we don't do it.

I mean, there are ways of relieving the tension in the meantime, of actually getting an agreement, which again is a common tactic in therapy: that in fact you will continue, as long as you appear to be serious about this relationship, to live with each other and not just cut each other up while working this through, or if it's a more serious thing, you live apart while you're working it through. There are ways of making short-term agreements that create a field within which the other can happen. Therefore, the mechanism as such is less than the intent, the depth of understanding that's brought to it. It's the systemic superficiality that we've brought – again, that can sound like a cheap shot; I don't mean that – because I understand that an industrial culture has a bias to "fixing" things rather than moving to upstream causes.

MR. CHIVERS: That may well be the advantage to the constituent assembly process too, that it is a mechanism that allows us to deal with the immediate crisis but deal with it in an ongoing and historical manner.

MR. NELSON: It could be done that way, but I think we'd both acknowledge that it could also be done in a way that it



didn't. So it's not the device per se but the way that's it's done. But I agree that it could in fact be a useful device.

**MR. CHIVERS:** Certainly there has been a good deal of concern presented to us in terms of how you constitute a constituent assembly. It can't be a process left to politicians. It has to involve a broader group. It has to have a broader constituency than just politicians, because there's a concern that politicians aren't really representing the people.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** We have to move along. Nancy and then Bob.

**MS BETKOWSKI:** I guess mine's just a request that as you start to have a better sense of the arrangements you think we might contemplate, I hope you'll share them with us as a committee. I think what I hear you saying is that the quality of leadership that you feel will change is a quality that's going to bring people into accepting a commitment to Canada, and it's not going to be a hierarchical model. It's not going to be any of the models that we've contemplated. So your suggestion for "Steady on the course and give yourself some way of assessing your progress" is a productive one. I won't put a question, but I just ask you to please share it as you go through it, because it's certainly a unique presentation that we've heard.

**MR. NELSON:** Let me just offer an image or metaphor that I find helpful. It seems to me that in personal life one goes from a state of dependency as a newborn when literally you can't tell where you stop and your mother starts, and that's essentially the state of childhood, of learning in a sense to be your own person, which gets accentuated in adolescence when the myth is that if we just do our own thing and stay out of each other's way, then everything is well. If we work through that, we come to a place where you're a strong enough person, because you've lived your adolescence authentically, that you can then live your life with and through other people without being fearful that other people will own you or manipulate you or destroy you. In marriage, you see, some people think they can fix their marriage by having such a rigid contract that they don't ever really have to engage with each other and, in fact, all problems are settled, as opposed to them taking the risk of intimacy, of how you develop the kind of supportive, open relationship where neither consumes the other.

10:05

I would argue that that's what we face as a country in the way we're now going about it with the whole business of the division of powers. You do this and I do that and we've got to have absolutely no overlap. Intimacy means that in fact any issue is open. So as a quick cut at it, I would argue that rather than going about the BNA Act the way we're going about it, putting all the pieces on the table and saying, "Well, you'll get this one and I'll get this one," in an ecological world the fact is that you can take any one of those and put the whole world through it. If mine is education or health or culture or communications, I can suck everything else in the world into that, in which case this is a silly way of thinking in an ecological world.

I think one could play with an idea – and I would do this over time – of moving towards a Canada in which literally it would be legitimate for the provinces to operationalize everything but in which the federal government has a role of, if you like, the myth-maker, not in a way that it precludes the others but in a way that they share it. Literally it says, like a parent to an adult

child: "I no longer in any way live your life for you, but I have the right to ask you questions about any part of your life. Now, the price I pay for that is that you can ask me rude questions as well, but we know we're stuck with each other and committed to each other." That's an image fundamentally different from any on the table now, of either a strong central government in the sense that it's going to run us, and that's boring, or each living our own lives, which is equally boring. I think the question has to do with: how do we help change the metaphors and let Canadians understand that there are alternatives open to us, if we're willing to work our way through them, that we haven't seriously begun to consider yet? That's not a shot at any of us; it's just to say that that's where we are in our development. But if that's where we are, then how do we reinforce that and move on?

**MS BETKOWSKI:** Well, a codependency model is about learning to deal with something, accepting the reasons, and going on with life, which is what you're saying.

**MR. NELSON:** But it does mean there has to be a common project.

**MS BETKOWSKI:** That's right.

**MR. NELSON:** Which takes me back. If there's not a common project, then in fact the whole thing isn't on. That, I think, is where we are.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** As chairman I'm getting a little anxious, because we have a long list of people to appear and Bob Hawkesworth and Yolande both wish to pose questions or comment.

**MR. HAWKESWORTH:** I'd perhaps be content, Mr. Chairman, if I knew this was not the end of our presentation. I guess my only concern is that seemingly the only group in this country at the moment that seems to be wrestling with this in terms of a real discussion about the project is the federal cabinet. Our first ministers, our Premiers, can get together, but one party is not there and won't be there sitting and waiting for proposals from the rest of Canada. Whether in fact they're represented or not, Quebec has some of its own stories that it's telling itself about its place in North America, its place in Canada, that Canada doesn't want it, and at the moment there doesn't seem to be a lot of communication going on between the two sides. I don't know whether that complicates what you're telling us today or if that's just one more challenge we have to overcome. I don't know.

**MR. NELSON:** I think the latter. Could I say, Mr. Chairman, that I live in Alberta. I'm a citizen. If it's helpful, I'm perfectly willing to appear either with this group again or as a consultant. I'll let anybody buy me a cup of coffee.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Thank you very much.

**MR. NELSON:** This needn't be the last opportunity to think about these things if it turns out that the way I think about them is helpful.

**MRS. GAGNON:** I'll try to keep it very brief as well. I just want to say that I'm a Francophone Albertan who lived with both story one and story two my whole life. I'd also like to use

a metaphor, that of giving birth. I think at this point in time we're going through very hard labour which will last a long time, and at the end of it hopefully we'll come up with a beautiful child.

I think what you're suggesting, though, is that we all have to accept higher order values. I'm wondering if what you envision would be those common values we would all share: fairness, social justice, openness, that kind of thing. If we developed that, however, we still would have some of the thorny issues about culture and language and freedom. I agree with you totally that we have to have those common values, and hopefully we'll arrive at those. What is dear to us? What is our story? But how will we resolve those still thorny issues of living together, sharing those values? Will we have to put aside other things in order to have the higher values?

MR. NELSON: In my lexicon a story which is about a common project is a more fundamental thing than values. The values are a function of the story rather than the other way around. Therefore, it's not that I in any way despise values – I think they're terribly important – but my observation would be that getting common values doesn't take you very far precisely for the reasons you've implied. It begs the question: what story are we in and is there a common project? If you can get that, then in fact the other gets worked out. So it's not to despise that but to say that I think the accent has to be on: is there something worth doing together that includes everybody, including Francophones? Is there a good reason to say to folks in Quebec, but not to beg people to stay: "Look, we're on such an exciting project here; you can either be part of it or not. If you finally decide to leave, God bless, but the fact is that with or without you this is the project we're about." You see, it's the lack of that confidence that there's a Canadian project with or without Quebec that's killing us, in part because all our leaders for 30 years have told us that if Quebec leaves, we're finished.

MRS. GAGNON: A simpler way of putting it is that there's been a lack of leadership.

MR. NELSON: No, there hasn't been a lack of leadership.

MRS. GAGNON: Or the right leader.

MR. NELSON: There has been from Mike Pearson through Pierre Trudeau and Brian Mulroney. I mean, in that sense, to use Mulroney's phrase, they've all sung from the same hymn book. It's a hymn book that has said that the pacification of Quebec is primary and, in order to do that, we will even abort the known story and try to replace it with one and foist it on people if need be and not work at that. There's been leadership in that. They've been incredibly effective, and it's cost us billions of dollars. I mean, there's been lots of leadership. What there hasn't been is integrity. It gets back to your values.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. We'll look forward to reading your completed scenario when you finish it. Thank you very much.

I don't believe Glenn Carlsen is with us, unless I'm mistaken, so we'll move on to the next presenter, Norris Wood.

MR. WOOD: Good morning.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good morning.

MR. WOOD: I will begin my remarks by asking: is Canada today operating as a colony or a democracy or a dictatorship? Here are my answers to that question. It appears to me that when the current Prime Minister, cap in hand, goes to the Queen for a decision and she makes the decision, we are a colony. I refer to the appointment of the eight extra Senators, all patronage appointments.

Two, I understood that at the 1982 patriation of the Constitution we had cut the apron strings and were now a democracy. If this is the case, the offices of Governor General and Lieutenant Governor, patronage appointments, are redundant. These positions should be abolished immediately, resulting in a considerable saving to the taxpayer.

Three, when the current Prime Minister expels from the caucus MPs who vote according to the wishes of their constituents, this is a dictatorship. I refer to MPs Kindy and Kilgour.

The current Charter of Rights and the Constitution are a continual bone of contention. Canada operated for over 100 years without these documents and without the turmoil we're going through at the present time. I predict it will become worse. More and more decisions are now being made by the Supreme Court.

In my opinion, the following should be implemented into a new Canadian Constitution. Elections, both federal and provincial, should be held at a fixed date every four years. This would eliminate one person deciding when it is an advantageous time to call an election.

The Prime Minister would be required to face the electorate countrywide. This would eliminate the current practice of a party leader automatically becoming the Prime Minister. This could also apply provincially.

The Prime Minister's position should be limited to two four-year terms. This would eliminate a dominant Prime Minister term after term dominating a weak cabinet appointed by himself.

Elected MPs and MLAs are servants of the people, not of their particular party. They should not be required to vote along strict party lines.

10:15

A system of recall and/or impeachment of MPs, also MLAs, should be established. Under our current method, once a member is elected, the electorate lose control until the next election.

The size of the cabinet, within reason, should be established. We do not need 39 cabinet ministers plus deputy ministers to govern 26 million people. Our neighbours to the south have 12 for 250 million people.

The mandate of the government, as I understand it, is to pass laws and to see that they are enforced. The government should not be operating Crown corporations and especially in opposition to corporations in the private sector. I refer to glaring examples: Petro-Canada and the CBC.

The Senate should be a triple E Senate. A triple E Senate with its check and balance is the only way a province or territory will have an equal say in the operation of the country.

I will now discuss some current problems affecting the country.

The Official Languages Act. During my high school years French was offered as an option, and many of us enrolled. There was not any animosity at that time towards Francophones. This has now changed, and I resent this Act. Why? The bilingual issue started under the Pearson regime, was actively pursued by Trudeau, and now Mulroney's Bill C-72. What are



the costs of this program? I say they're astronomical. How are we going to correct this situation? By rescinding the Official Languages Act in Bill C-72. Every person can then speak the language of his or her choice.

The unity question. Let us go back to September 13, 1759, of which tomorrow is the anniversary, when the French were defeated on the Plains of Abraham. During the capitulation of Quebec City and later Montreal, there was not any mention of French language. In the 1791 Canada Act there was not any mention of French language. Every province and territory should be treated equally and governed by the same laws: no special concessions to anyone. We hear continual rumblings from a loud minority, Quebec, to a silent majority, the rest of Canada, that they are going to separate. I say to those who are talking separation that the land in Quebec is part of Canada. To those wishing to separate, they are free to leave the country; no one is indispensable.

Multiculturalism. The word "multiculturalism" was not heard of when your ancestors and mine pioneered and settled this country. Immigrants from various countries brought their own cultures but were assimilated into a founding Canada. The majority of immigrants come to Canada in an endeavour to benefit themselves. They do not expect multiculturalism. They expect to assimilate. By this 1988 Multiculturalism Act, the Charter of Rights, and spending millions of dollars to accommodate ethnic groups, the federal government is changing Canadian traditions. One good example: the turbaned RCMP. There's a growing tendency of political parties catering to ethnic groups in an endeavour to receive their votes.

Immigration. Seventy-eight percent of Canadians said no to a 1987 Gallup poll asking the question: do you think the size and content of immigration should be permitted to change our ethnic and cultural balance? Did the government listen? I say no. What is Canada's criterion for accepting immigrants? I feel that it is badly flawed. Why is the government spending taxpayers' money to educate immigrants? I say let them assimilate into our society at their own expense. Why do we import foreign labour when we have high unemployment? What percentage of our immigrants come from European countries like the original settlers? I do not have any figures, but presume it is a small percentage. What percentage of immigrants settle in rural areas? Again I guess a small minority. Do we have a quota system? Canada's culture is being reduced to a par with other alien cultures. What is our system for eliminating from Canada bogus refugee claimants? Some have been here for five years or more and now have grass roots.

I left out at this time the aboriginal question, the Canadian deficit, foreign aid, and child care.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Wood, for your comments. Questions? Dennis.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Wood, you suggested a number of very fundamental changes to our system – the direct election of the Prime Minister and Premiers, and some of the others – some of which would be characteristics of the American system and I suppose some others. Would you suggest changing much closer in all ways to the American system? I'm thinking specifically of the break between the legislative and the administrative functions of government, because you've now taken the Prime Minister or a Premier away from the classical British way of selecting them.

10:25

MR. WOOD: Well, why did the States break away from England in the first place? Because they weren't satisfied with the system. No, I prefer the American system. The people are more accountable to the people.

MR. ANDERSON: Okay. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other questions or comments?

I don't think there's any doubt that you are advocating abandonment of the British parliamentary system in favour of the American system; that's the bottom line of your presentation.

MR. WOOD: That's right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Interesting. I'm just going to share with you a little occurrence. I went to a conference in the United States. I have a very close working relationship with the United States legislators at the state level; I'm the honorary director for Canada on the State Legislative Leaders Foundation, so I'm very familiar with their activities and their structure. When I was at the conference in Boston at the end of June attended by legislators, leaders of the various Legislatures from approximately 30 states, the Boston University School of Management put on a course for us on how to be better legislators. Each legislator was asked to give their most pressing political concerns. Not issues; concerns. At the end of the day the professor told us that the most pressing political concern to the U.S. legislators was public cynicism towards politicians . . .

MR. WOOD: Well, we have that in Canada.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I'm just telling you.

. . . secondly, public dissatisfaction with their system of government, and thirdly, the role of the media in terms of their ability to relate to their constituents.

So I just leave that with you for thought. The grass may be always greener on the other side of the fence. The Americans look at our system and say to me, "I only wish we had some of the features of the parliamentary system, such as question period, the ability to question the Prime Minister or the Premiers or their cabinets, et cetera." You know, I'm not denigrating your view at all; I'm just sharing with you that they have very real concerns as well about how effectively their system is able to serve the needs of the people of the United States.

MR. WOOD: Yeah. Well, my answer to that is that although I was born in Canada, I also lived in the States, and to refute your argument there, 95 percent of the people in the States don't know what's happening in Canada, or they're not interested in politics down there to a great extent. They don't know what our system is.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But the state legislative leaders do.

MR. WOOD: Well, yeah, I'll admit there's a few of them; I'll grant you that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's what I'm just saying. In any event, it's an interesting point.

Thank you very much for coming.

I believe the next presenter is Naheed Nenshi. I don't believe Karen Gainer is present. I understand Mr. Carlson will be coming to see us tomorrow.

Welcome.

**MR. NENSHI:** Thank you. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, good morning. I have been given 15 minutes to speak, which as Mr. Hawkesworth can probably attest to, is like asking a herd of elephants to stampede but only for 10 metres. So, we'll see what we can do here.

My name is Naheed Nenshi. I live in Calgary; I've lived in Calgary almost all of my life. I speak French. My parents came to this country in late 1971. I missed being an immigrant by six months; for those of you who are a little bit swift with your calculators, that means that I'm not quite 20 years old yet. I've never voted in a federal or a provincial election, but I can tell you one thing, and that is that I'm a Canadian and I'm proud to be a Canadian.

In my little presentation today I'm going to touch on two facets. First I'm going to talk a little bit about federalism, how it relates to postsecondary education, because that's my field of expertise. We're not going to go into too much depth on that because it's very complicated and I only have 15 minutes after all. I meant to bring in a copy of some of the research I've done, but due to some technical problems I wasn't able to bring it, so I will send it to the committee. After that I'd just like to talk generally a little bit about the state of the nation.

We'll start with postsecondary education. I have the privilege to attend what I think is one of the finest postsecondary educational institutions in the country, that being the University of Calgary. I'm very proud to be at the University of Calgary, and I'm very proud of what has been done with the University of Calgary largely thanks to the efforts of both federal and provincial governments. However, I have a bunch of horror stories too, and Mrs. Gagnon can tell you many, many of them about the state of postsecondary education in this province today. Let me just tell you a quick one.

I've just been accepted into what is the best business school in this country, which is the Faculty of Management at the University of Calgary. Now that I'm into this program, I still find that my smallest classes have over 75 people in them; my exams are all multiple choice. So despite the fact that I'm going into a program which has a reputation of high quality, that quality is changing and degrading as we go along.

So what in the world does that have to do with federalism? As you all know, education is a provincial matter, has been a provincial matter since Confederation. What a lot of people don't know, though, is the fact that postsecondary education has always been a bone of contention between the federal and provincial governments and in fact is something that we discuss a lot when we talk about federalism and the problems therefrom. If we start right after the Second World War, you'll see that there was a big boom in postsecondary education among Canadians, that largely due to war veterans. Those veterans were all at school on scholarships provided by the federal government. The institutions got used to the money coming from the federal government, and a system evolved whereby the federal government would give per capita grants directly to postsecondary institutions. Of course, the provinces didn't like that very much because that was intrusion into their field of power, so we changed into what was called the shared-cost system: for every dollar that provincial governments would spend, the federal government would also chip in a dollar

towards postsecondary education and, by this time, towards health care as well.

Now, that sort of didn't work because there were no controls. The federal government couldn't control how much they were spending, and the provincial governments – well, to be charitable, if another government is spending half of what your expenditures are going to be, you might be a little tempted to spend more than you might afford. So this ran into a program called established programs financing, which is where we are today. This is transfer payments from the federal government to the provinces which are earmarked for postsecondary education and health care. There's no requirement that these go towards paying those funds in particular, but that's what they're earmarked for.

The idea behind EPF when it was introduced in 1978 was that it would escalate with the GNP every year, and frankly, the federal government contribution would remain constant at about half of the cost of postsecondary education. That didn't happen. When the GNP escalator started increasing, the provinces realized that they had a cash cow on their hands and they could get away with spending less and less. It got so that in the early 1980s, for four of the 12 realms of government – because Yukon and Northwest Territories are included as well – more than 100 percent of what they spent on postsecondary education was being provided by the federal government. In other words, the federal government would give \$10 billion to, for example, the province of British Columbia, saying, "This is for spending on postsecondary education," and the province of British Columbia would spend \$9 billion. In other words, they were supposed to match that \$10 billion, but in fact they took \$1 billion and spent it somewhere else, which of course is their prerogative. This has changed lately, and the EPF funds have been declining more and more.

Now, if you look at your own discussion paper, there's a rather bizarre graph in here which talks about federal transfers to Alberta for health and postsecondary education. It's on page 10. We can see that the transfers have been rising and rising and rising until 1989 when the federal government, trying to cut off the deficit, froze the payments. Then we have this wonderful dotted line here, which is the projected number of transfers. Now, I don't know who projected that or where it's been projected from. Maybe that's what happens if the Reform Party forms a government in 1992, but I honestly don't see this happening.

**MS BETKOWSKI:** Bill C-69.

**MR. HAWKESWORTH:** Federal legislation.

**MR. NENSHI:** Exactly. But to be honest with you, this is not something that I see happening. I just do not see that the federal government will completely move out of this sphere, especially in terms of what we're talking about constitutionally, which is what I'm going to talk about right now.

We can look at some directions and some trends on to where the funding of postsecondary education is going.

**10:35**

We'll start with the Johnston report, which was commissioned by the Liberal government in 1983, completed in 1985 with the new government in place. The Johnston report talked about going back to a shared-costs aspect, with the federal government matching increases in funding depending on what the provincial governments were willing to put up, which is a kind of interest-

ing idea but one which I don't think anyone will agree to. Something else, in relation to health care, is that there's a federal piece of legislation called the Canada health plan. This directs EPF funding, but what it basically says is that there are certain national standards that must be met by all the provinces before they're going to get any funding for health care, which is a neat idea, something which I think will probably be implemented in the next few years in the postsecondary educational sphere. The reason I think that is something which I'll be coming back to a little bit later, but if you look at the findings of the Spicer commission, for example, and of every poll that's been done in the last five or six years, the one thing that Canadians seem to agree on is that there should be national standards for social services, and one of those national standards should be in the field of education. I think that's the one thing the Spicer commission found the most consensus on among Canadians. I think that's something which we really have to look at. From there I'm going to go on a little bit. I will supply to the committee some more information on exactly how the funding works, because it's very complicated, but it's something that we have to keep in mind as we're formulating a "new Canada."

From there let me talk a little bit about the general state and why this committee has been set up. My parents came to this country as bona fide immigrants, but I like to think sometimes that they were refugees, even though they weren't. They were refugees; they were coming from east Africa. They were coming from a system where no matter how much wealth they amassed, no matter how well they did, no matter how much good they did for the society in which they were living, they were still regarded as second-class citizens. They came to this country to avoid that. They came to this country to come to somewhere where they had equality of opportunity, where their opportunities were equalized with everyone else's regardless of where they came from and what colour they were. I think that's something which is quite, quite vital.

I didn't mean to really go a great deal into what I don't agree with, but listening to the previous presenter, you're going to see a little bit of a diametric difference here, and I just want to tell you a little bit about why. We've heard a lot about how Canadians should adopt the "American system" and talk about how the American system would help us solve our problems. Well, there are some distinct differences here. One is that 25 percent of Americans are not a language minority, and that's probably the biggest one. Another is that Canadians are – and I like to believe it, and I really hope it's true – fundamentally and intrinsically different from Americans. Starting from social aspects to just our simple culture, some of these things won't work. The question is that if we adopt the American system of assimilation and adopt the American parliamentary system, is that going to bring in problems of the American ills, the American woes? It would be very, very hard to convince me that our theory of multiculturalism is less beneficial than the Americans' theory of assimilation. I can see that we have a great deal less racial violence, a great deal less racial tension than they do in the United States. I think perhaps our policy of multiculturalism is in part to thank for that.

I'm not going to go a great deal into how the government should work, but let's talk a little bit about Canadian society, Canadian culture, shall we? We've heard a little bit about the Official Languages Act today and how, when the previous presenter was in high school, French was an option and a few people took it and there was no animosity. Well, French is still an option, a lot of people still take it, and I still don't think

there's a great deal of animosity. We were told that by rescinding the Official Languages Act, Canadians would be able to speak whatever language they choose. Well, Canadians are able to speak whatever language they choose. The Official Languages Act doesn't say that these kids have to speak French, these kids have to speak English, and everyone has to be happy together. I think that's one of the myths of Canada right now, and that's a myth we have to look at and a myth we have to work hard to dispel.

We talked a lot about loud minorities versus silent majorities, and I think that's the key here. I think that's when we start talking about these myths which simply are untrue. For example, we're sitting here in Calgary. Calgary's the most redneck, rootin'-tootin' city in the entire country. We don't want those Francophones here, come on, very Preston Manning, very Reform Party. However, Calgary also has by far the highest rates of French immersion for children in the country. How do we reconcile those two? Which is true? Which is a myth? You see, that's what we really have to look at.

Now, I want to get on to one of my favourite topics, which is the topic of bilingualism and multiculturalism. Oh, boy. I was just listening to the previous presenter talking about how immigrants come to this country expecting to assimilate and how the federal government or government in general should not pay any money to help them assimilate, they should just assimilate on their own, and we'd live in a wonderful, bland, white utopia, as long as we get lots more immigrants from European countries. I don't mean to denigrate the views of the previous speaker, but do you see a base contradiction here? Frankly, we're being told that immigrants have to assimilate, that they shouldn't keep their own culture, but we're not going to help them do it. I ask: how is that going to work?

Multiculturalism is a brilliant idea, and it works well on a piece of paper. But does it really work well for the woman who comes here from Vietnam, who has to take care of her kids during the day while her husband is off at work, who has to go and work in some factory in the evening, who has no opportunity to learn the English language, who has no opportunity to better herself and is simply living in a ghetto? I don't think that when these immigrants came to this country and looked at a land of promise, what they were looking for was three square blocks in downtown Calgary where they can speak their language and the only place they can make themselves understood. I don't think that's fair. I think it's time to start looking at multiculturalism as a wonderful idea and an idea which will forward the advancement of Canada, but it has to be more than words on a piece of parchment in a safe in Ottawa somewhere. We have to start putting it into action. I don't mean affirmative action, and I don't mean employment equity programs. I mean simple things, like how about accessible English as a Second Language course? How about new relationships between government and business in terms of setting up on site, on-the-job job training programs? How about new job training programs, simple things like that? That's when multiculturalism will work.

You see, I don't buy the idea that immigrants are eroding the Canadian national culture, and I don't buy the idea that by letting in all these immigrants, we are getting rid of the Canadian national culture, because frankly what is the Canadian national culture? Can I stand up and say that I'm the Canadian national culture? Can Mr. Hawkesworth stand up and say that he's the Canadian national culture? Can Mrs. Gagnon, who's a Francophone in Alberta, stand up and say that she represents Canadian national culture? Frankly, all of us do. Every one of us has something to contribute to the Canadian cultural and

social fabric, and that's what multiculturalism means. Multiculturalism doesn't mean millions of dollars – I don't know where we get that figure – spent on ethnic groups so that they'll vote for this particular party. No. What it means is that every single person has something to contribute to this country, and every single person has the opportunity to contribute that to this country, and I think that's just vital.

I've gone off on a bit of a tangent here. Let me get back to what I feel is the problem of unification here in Canada. My parents came to this country because they liked Canada the way it was. Right now we're talking about Alberta in a "new Canada." I'd like to tell you what I think is really wrong with this country, and it has to do a lot with those loud minorities. Those loud minorities are not ethnic groups. They're not the feminists, the environmentalists. I hate to say it, but those loud minorities are the politicians. I think the best analogy I can use is one which I heard a friend of mine making in a similar submission, which was that the first ministers come to the table and act like it's a divorce court. I want the dog; I want the car; I want the house; you can take the kids. All that we hear is: I want, I want, I want, I want, I want. When we go to a First Ministers' Conference, we have Robert Bourassa speaking for Quebec, we have Don Getty speaking for Alberta, we have Brian Mulroney speaking for Brian Mulroney, and we have nobody speaking for Canada. Canada is just one vote out of 11, yet no one is truly speaking for what is good for the nation. I ask you: is that really what Canadians want?

I find it very, very interesting that in the discussion paper one of the round table discussions was entitled Western Canada Perspectives and Quebec Perspectives. The presenter of western Canada perspectives was Ted Byfield; the presenter of Quebec perspectives was Lise Bissonnette. Now, I wonder: do those two individuals really represent the views of the majority of people in those areas? I hope not. I think that if Mr. Byfield's views were the views of everyone in Alberta, I wouldn't be able to walk down the street without having rocks chucked at my head. Good Lord, a visible minority, environmentalist, student, professionally educated, and I hope he's not Sikh. It's as simple as that, and I really don't think that when you listen to people like Mr. Byfield and Ms Bissonnette, you're really getting the views of people who are Canadians.

It's interesting, because in Quebec they talk about Francophones who speak in favour of Canada as *les vendus*, sellouts. I really don't think so. I think if you look at it, *c'est Lise Bissonnette, Jacques Parizeau, et même Ted Byfield et Preston Manning qui sont les vendus. Ils vendent l'idée qui est le Canada. They're selling the idea which is Canada. They're selling it to gain more power for themselves. It's as simple as that. You know, it sounds like some sort of paranoid, xenophobic theory, but that's simply what it is.*

#### 10:45

Let me give you a couple of examples. I took a class last year which was a general interest class in Canadian federalism, about 60 people in that class. It was a general interest course, and none of them were political science majors or anything like that. We ranged in age from about 18 to about 50, all sorts of people in that class, a pretty good cross section of people who live in Calgary. The only thing we had in common was that we were taking a class at the university. We made a submission to the Spicer commission in that class. We found that all but one person in the entire class believed in Canada, believed in Quebec, and believed in a strong central government for Canada. Now, I tell you, that is completely at odds with what

the politicians are telling us. We're getting provincial politicians telling us that the old idea of Canada is dead, that the idea of Canada as centralist, one big government, is dead, that what we need is much more autonomy for the provinces. Every single provincial Premier is telling us that, every single one. Yet out of a class of 60 cross-section Albertans, one out of 60 believed in that.

Do Canadians and, in fact, the provinces really understand what it means to be decentralized, for each province to devolve into its own power structure? What it means is that you will not have one nation. You'll have 10 little nations, which may sound like not a bad idea. It might be a solution to our problems, but let's take it on a micro, micro perspective. Let's look at someone entering high school in the province of Alberta and someone entering high school in the province of Newfoundland. Do those two have equality of opportunity? Are they going to get the same quality of education in high school, let alone in postsecondary education? The problem is, no, that's not what's going to happen. You end up with a patchwork quilt across this country, good programs where they have money, bad programs where they don't, and I don't think that's what Canadians want. I think Canadians are committed enough to the idea of Canada to say that, yes, everyone across Canada should at least have equality of opportunity. If the provinces are going to be equal, why shouldn't the people be equal?

One final thing I want to mention just on that idea is: I've talked to you a little bit about the attitudes of people here in Alberta, in Anglophone Canada, but what about the attitudes of people in Quebec? It's an interesting thing to remember, because we have tunnel vision. We say that, oh, separatism is a big, important thing; all the people of Quebec want to separate. We have to placate them; we have to do something because separatism is inevitable. But I wonder if that's really true. A simple examination shows you that 11 years ago, in 1980, separatism was so inevitable in Quebec that they had a referendum, a referendum which barely failed, and separatism was going to happen unless there was another deal. Five years later, in 1985, the Parti Québécois dropped separatism as an election platform because there was no support for it whatsoever, because nobody believed in separatism anymore. Now we're six years later, after the Mulroney government has tried to placate Quebec so much, and suddenly separatism is an issue. I'll tell you this, and this can be my prediction: you saw that after the Meech Lake accord support for separatism was extremely high in Quebec, about 60 percent, and since then it's waned, and I tell you that that 60 percent is the peak. It's the summit, because everything that had gone wrong with Quebec that could have gone wrong, everything that Canada could have done wrong to the province of Quebec, had happened towards the death of Meech Lake, and now it's on the wane. Now Quebeckers are seeing that the people in Canada really do care about making a new deal. They don't care about giving special concessions to Alberta or to Quebec, for that matter, but they care about talking about how we can all stay together, and they are committed to Canada. I think that's the most vital thing, and that's the idea that I will probably leave you with.

I just want to tell you one final thing, which is my dream. My dream is to live in a strong country, a country which is committed to itself and to the people within it. My dream is to be able to go anywhere in Canada or anywhere in the world, for that matter, and be able to say: *Je m'appelle Naheed Nenshi. J'habite à Calgary. Je parle français. Mes parents sont venus au Canada en 1971, mais je suis Canadien, et je suis fier. I am Canadian and I'm damn proud of it.*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Any questions or comments?

I appreciate very much what you have put to us today from a perspective that I think we need to hear. As you might expect, we have been hearing a wide variety of views relative to the roles of government: central government, provincial governments. It varies somewhat from location to location in the province. We appreciate your comments.

Yes, Yolande.

MRS. GAGNON: May I just quickly. Were you here when we heard from Mr. Ruben Nelson, the futurist?

MR. NENSHI: I caught the end of it.

MRS. GAGNON: I'd just like to make the comment that he predicted that we are in the midst of birth throes and we are creating a new country. I see someone like yourself as certainly one of those creators, and I thank you for your presentation.

MR. NENSHI: Well, you see, that's the interesting thing. Everyone is talking about creating a new country and starting all over again. Maybe that's what we need, but I honestly think we've got a good thing here; we have a really good thing here. Why don't we build on what we have, start making changes? I don't like to say the term "creating" because creating to me implies we're throwing out 125 years, more than that, of history and starting from scratch, and I don't think that's what we need, really.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Nelson gave us a philosophical approach to this thing, and it was useful.

MRS. GAGNON: Yeah; maybe we're beyond the baby stage. We're teenagers.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's a thesis that he's going to develop further, as to where we have to go from here, and we'll be interested in hearing the balance of his presentation.

Fred.

MR. BRADLEY: I appreciate your deep feelings about the country. There's just one thought that I'd like to put forward and ask you a question about. There's one area in which the federal government currently does have jurisdiction - health, education, and the environment, total jurisdiction and responsibility for it - and that's on our Indian reservations. Do you think they have been successful in carrying out that mandate, that it's been effective having them have total control in that area of jurisdiction?

MR. NENSHI: That's an interesting thing, actually. I'm glad you mention that, because it's on my list, and I thought I rather cut myself short.

MR. BRADLEY: We heard yesterday from a treaty Indian in Rocky Mountain House who was very concerned about that and left us with the figure - I think she said about 73 to 75 percent of their expenditure had been in administration, and it hadn't got directly down to the people who required these services.

MR. NENSHI: Well, that's absolutely correct, if you look at the rates. You know, we all know about the unemployment rate

on Indian reserves, which is just astronomical. We know about the living conditions. An interesting statistic from a couple of years ago is that 20 percent of homes on Indian reserves had indoor plumbing. So you can see that you're seriously infringing a Third World country within Canada.

Now, you say that the federal government having complete control has not worked, and that's absolutely correct. On the converse, I don't think passing that control to the provinces will honestly be any better.

MR. BRADLEY: I'm not suggesting that we're asking for that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nobody is asking for that.

MR. NENSHI: No; I don't think so. Of course, what you're getting at is aboriginal self-government, which is often a very misunderstood term. You know, a lot of people think it means many, many small nations within Canada, and in a sense it does. But in the wider sense what it means is giving aboriginal people more control over their own living conditions, because frankly they have this sort of benevolent dictator in Ottawa who tells them exactly what they can do. On some Indian reserves there's not even the equivalent of municipal government. I think that aboriginal self-government is something we truly, truly have to look at, and it's something we have to deal with immediately because we owe a debt to those people.

On the other hand, when we talk about things like guaranteed seats for aboriginal peoples in the Legislatures and Parliament of this country, I'm not so sure that that, too, is such a great idea because we want aboriginal people to realize that they are owed a great deal of respect from the people of Canada, because after all they were here first, but at the same time, they are equal to everyone else in Canada. Frankly, right now they're not. That's something we have to remember. They are denigrated, and they are far below the levels which other Canadians have, and we have to bring them up to equality. But I don't know if elevating them that one step further is something we want to look at.

MR. BRADLEY: There's certainly that area in terms of aboriginal issues, but I also wanted to leave with you the thought that transferring responsibility for health, education, and the environment to a central government may not be the most efficient and effective way of delivering these services.

MR. NENSHI: I don't know that I was necessarily talking about transferring responsibility fully. What I am thinking about a lot in health care is what's already in place, that the provinces have the power over health care. However, the federal government has the right to enforce certain national standards, and that's precisely what I'm looking at.

In terms of the environment, which of course is something which is very, very important, which I didn't mention earlier, if you devolve responsibility for the environment into these smaller areas, perhaps, yes, it will be more efficient. But on the other hand, you'll have wide variances. You know, the environment - the air, the water - is something that flows across provincial boundaries and across national boundaries, so if Alberta, for example, has sterling environmental qualities and one of our neighbours in either direction doesn't, then we're the ones who are losing from that. I think it's important that there be national standards for the environment and perhaps national control over environmental issues because that's the only way we can really make a difference.

10:55

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, thank you very much. I could go into some dissertation with you on your allegations about the spending of EPF, since I was Minister of Advanced Education between 1979 and '82, but I won't do that now. But thank you very much for coming forward.

MR. NENSHI: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Orville Burkinshaw. Good morning.

MR. BURKINSHAW: Mr. Chairman, committee members, and ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for this opportunity to voice my concerns about Canada's problems and make some constructive suggestions that I trust will be given serious consideration.

For the record, I'm a native Albertan, born on a homestead in southeastern Alberta where both my parents and my grandparents homesteaded in 1909, trekking by team and wagon 80 miles from Bassano and fording the Red Deer River. My wife and I have nine children and 23 grandchildren, so we have a lot of reasons to be concerned about Canada. I've spent the majority of my adult life in oil and gas exploration as a self-taught geological engineer. Beyond that, I'm a born optimist. My areas of concern are many, but they can be resolved if we all work at it.

Earlier this year I prepared an eight-page paper entitled Master Plan for a New Canada, and I sent it to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney with a covering letter and sent copies to the Premiers, to 295 MPs, to 109 Senators, and to 755 MLAs in the 10 provinces, Yukon, and the Territories. Out of the 1,155 politicians about 60 responded. I have made copies of all of the send-outs for each committee member and have attached the presentations I have today.

When Joe Clark was made minister of Constitutional Affairs, I wrote him a four and a half page letter and sent copies to all the MLAs in Quebec. That province has been making the most noise about separating, so I wanted to alert them to what they could lose. Amongst the other things I said:

I for one have no concern about any Province electing to separate when they seriously consider what they will lose. Should [any] Province separate, if they in fact are . . . able to, its people will become citizens of another country and awake the morning after to the following:

1. Loss of their Canadian Citizenship.
2. Loss of their seats and voice in the House of Commons.
3. Loss of their seats and voice in the Senate.
4. Postal services will be discontinued.
5. No Federal Government cheques will be coming for child support, Welfare, Pension Plans, Senior Citizens, U.I.C. or other forms of Government assistance.

And 25 other reasons.

I also wrote to the federal party leaders in opposition and took them to task for being such nonconstructive adversaries in the House of Commons, pointing out that most Canadians find mudslinging repulsive and debilitating to a nation. However, I do admit that under the flawed system they have very little alternative.

After careful analysis of our government system I found myself asking: why are the western provinces so unhappy with Ottawa? Why are the maritime provinces so unhappy with Ottawa? Why Ontario? Why Quebec? Why the natives? Why the north? Everybody's unhappy with Ottawa. Why? Surely 295 MPs and 109 Senators can't all be bad, nor can the 10 Premiers and the 755 MLAs be so incompetent that they're all missing the point.

The answer is very obvious: the system is flawed. We just have a flawed system, and that's the problem, not the people who are trying to give us reasonably good government.

On May 25 I attended a hearing in this room where Mr. Keith Laatsch gave a short but very profound discourse on why we need a Constitution and what its function should be. I was so impressed that with his permission I sent a copy to Joe Clark, to all the party leaders, and to the 10 Premiers. Allow me to read a couple of paragraphs.

Why do we need a Constitution? A Government, in order to function, must have a monopoly on the use of retaliatory force. It is very easy for unscrupulous and power-hungry officials to abuse this monopoly if not controlled. A properly drafted Constitution serves to control Government's use of power and is absolutely essential if we are to remain free. Further, a Constitution must also be a charter that recognizes and protects the individual's basic and unalienable rights that belong to everyone by virtue of their human nature.

Rights should not be confused with privileges granted by Government, as so prevalent in our current Charter of Rights. Finally, a Constitution should specifically define the divisions of power and responsibilities at the various levels of Government.

The basic principle underlying a proper Constitution should be - A private citizen may do anything except what is forbidden, whereas Government can do nothing except what is permitted.

If the above reasons for having a Constitution are valid it follows that the proper method of drafting the document, or any amendments thereto, is to call a convention of dedicated private citizens selected for their integrity, knowledge and statesmanship and who represent regions or Provinces equally. Under no circumstances should any current Government official or bureaucrat be involved except perhaps to chair the meetings and observe.

Remember, a Constitution should be a law to Government from the people.

Allow me to please enumerate some of the reasons why I feel our government system has to be revised. Canada really does not have a democratic government. This is a harsh and blunt statement, since we have multi political parties and elections, but let me explain this fact. The current Prime Minister was, if my memory serves me correctly, appointed leader of his party by less than 1,200 delegate votes. Because that party had the most members elected in the ensuing election, he was sworn in as Prime Minister of 27 million people by the vote of substantially less than one-tenth of 1 percent of the eligible voters. He cannot be replaced for five years without the whole government being brought down. In addition, he alone decides when the next election is to be held, with the only condition that it must be within five years.

That's not the worst part. The Prime Minister then selects a cabinet of ministers who hold their office entirely at his pleasure. If they do not conform to his exact wishes, they can be sent to the back benches without notice at half salary, more or less. Thus every minister in cabinet is forced to perform under a cloud, knowing he or she had better comply with the Prime Minister's wishes or they will lose their \$50,000 a year in salary and have their political career damaged.

The foregoing is bad enough, but the worst is yet to come. Every Bill that the Prime Minister wants passed when it comes to the floor of the House must get a yea from all his party's backbenchers or he kicks them out of the party, as happened to Mr. Kindy from Calgary and Mr. Kilgour from Edmonton. Both these men had the courage to vote the way their constituents wanted them to, which is supposedly the reason they were elected to the House of Commons to be Members of Parliament.



11:05

The cold, hard facts are that Canada is governed from the top down by one man, the Prime Minister. No amount of conversation about representation by population, about democracy and elections by the people, et cetera, can alter the truth that Canada is governed by a dictator. This position is achieved by a flawed system with money and promises and propaganda and elections and multi parties, but the end result is that one person becomes the dictator who plays the tune and the rest all dance.

A new Constitution should require that every vote in the House of Commons be a free vote, that defeats do not bring down the government except nonconfidence votes. I would inject here that maybe that even should be changed: the government is there, but if there is a fault with the Bills being continually rejected, maybe the Prime Minister should be changed. We want that our Prime Minister can be removed from office by a majority vote of the MPs in his party, as is the case in the United Kingdom, in Great Britain.

Another change that must be made is to ensure fairness of government from sea to sea. It has been said that the only thing we learn from history is that we don't learn anything, but we should. Let us look at the U.S., and perhaps we can learn something. It was in an identical position that Canada is now facing. They were trying to frame a Constitution, and its union was teetering on the verge of breakup. The largest states were demanding representation by population and the smaller states insisting on the equality that they had in the articles of confederation. The impasse was serious and separation imminent. In a break in the oral conflict Benjamin Franklin rose and pointed out that God had given the young nation guidance in the past and suggested that they have prayer. George Washington adjourned the session and opened in the morning with a prayer. The U.S. Congress has ever since opened each session with a prayer, even though their Supreme Court disallowed prayer and Bible reading in the nation's schools. It was interesting to note that Chicago banned prayer and Bible reading in their schools in 1927, and that city led the nation in crime for many years.

The U.S. created a bicameral body, Congress and Senate, the one electing members by representation and the other electing two Senators from each state, that in reality serves as a referee. Everyone was happy with proportionality in one House and equality in the other. Shouldn't we be able to learn from this object lesson? Canada, being a union of provinces, must have a triple E Senate to be the referee. Any provinces that will not accept a neutral referee obviously have ulterior motives.

Balkanization in Canada is a self-destructive condition that need not be, that must be deleted. I wrote to Joe Clark on July 22 to impress on him how much damage this is doing to Canada economically at a time when the provinces are demanding more powers. What we really have now are 10 very separate nations called provinces. May I quote from the letter to Joe Clark?

My purpose in writing this letter to you is to emphasize how much damage can be done to our nation by allowing more Balkanization. It seems most of the Provinces are demanding more powers which has the effect of creating 10 separate countries. There are many areas where the Federal Government should set . . . "standards" and then let the Provinces administer them.

Such matters as licensing professionals whether they be teachers, nurses, doctors, lawyers, veterinarians, engineers, geologists, geophysicists, mechanics, welders, plumbers, electricians and many others. A license in any province should be a license in Canada, not just one small area of a nation.

Other areas like building codes, highway regulations, education . . . should be standardized by the Federal Government and administered by the Provinces . . .

Securities regulations are an expensive disaster as are the companies branches of each Province. Surely a Federally incorporated charter should entitle a company to do business anywhere in Canada. Not so – it has to be registered as a foreign corporation in every Province it wishes to do business in. These obstacles that subdivide a nation are expensive, time consuming and put Canadians at a serious disadvantage in the competitive world.

Can you imagine what a mess it would be if every school in Calgary had its own curriculum and method of grading students but that is precisely what we have on a larger scale with each Province running its own show within one country . . .

Giving Provinces more powers with no standardization of guidelines is effectively dismantling Canada into 10 or 12 separate nations even though it may still be called Canada . . .

I urge you to take a hard look at what I'm trying to emphasize herein.

Because the system is flawed, the provinces are almost compelled to continuously strive for more powers; thus, the governments at all levels are frequently in an adversarial mode. It's worth noting that the native peoples, who probably have the most reasons to be frustrated, are more sophisticated, have more patience and more class than some others who make threats and won't even come to the table to talk.

The language problems in Canada have been blown far out of proportion. Language is only a means of communication, but so many politicians have made it either an excuse or the scapegoat. It is certainly the duty of the federal government to guarantee all Canadians the right to talk or teach or write or print in whatever language they choose without fear of being fined or jailed. This is one of the basic building blocks of freedom. At present either the Charter of Rights is a fraud or the Minister of Justice is derelict in her duty. Bill 178 in Quebec is a violation of the most basic right, and the federal government has not even challenged it in the Supreme Court.

Culture is a completely different animal. Nowhere in Canada has anyone tried to prevent any culture from being promoted. Tax dollars should never be expended to support culture. Let each be responsible for their own.

Our native people are the victims of a reservation system that is shameful. It's controlled by bureaucrats in Ottawa. It renders the individual hopeless. The structure is similar to the way Moscow has ruled and ruined its people in many smaller nations. Indian people are very capable, but under these circumstances it is obvious many have no hope. It should tell even the dullest of politicians that the system is wrong when 2 or 3 percent of the population supply 25 or 30 percent of the prison population. Why? Because booze and suicide seem to overwhelm people without hope. The whole system of reservations should be revised. The natives are asking government for more power, which would be an improvement, but they would still be in a socialist type of system where a chief and a council replace Ottawa in each unit. The alternative is to negotiate a whole new arrangement that will ensure the individual native freedom to use his or her abilities in the pursuit of wealth and happiness. It would mean dividing the land or replacing it with better land if necessary for a livelihood.

11:15

The Constitution must require that government protect the rights of the individual regardless of speech, colour, or age. The silent cry can be heard from the beating hearts of the unborn being destroyed daily. Their question must be: why do the

government, the judiciary, and the do-gooders rush to penalize anyone who kills or injures a cat or a dog or destroys duck eggs or owls and frogs or whatever, and then turn their backs while 200,000 babies are being destroyed in Canada every year? This social tragedy could be largely eliminated if immediate support was made available to the mothers to be and legislation enacted making the father responsible to pay the support, to repay the support, failing which a jail term would be mandatory. Present law allows the fathers to continue their irresponsible conduct with impunity. Government cannot legislate morality, but it has a duty to legislate responsibility.

Economic conditions are invariably entwined with the Constitution. Unions should not be allowed to hold third parties for ransom without being made responsible for damages, to be determined by binding arbitration. If deductions up to \$100 a month were made from each member and \$1,000 from each union leader until the damages were paid, these disruptions would cease and the nation's economy would be much stronger.

Our Constitution is a major cause of Canada's problems. Mr. Laatsch said with such profundity that a Constitution should be "a law to government" from the people. This we do not have. Government has to be prevented from sinking Canada into more debt. An annual \$30 billion to \$35 billion deficit for the past dozen years is disastrous. This is a breach of trust. The office of the Prime Minister is not intended to include a blank cheque signed by the citizens of Canada. The Constitution must not allow deficit financing at any level of government without specific voter approval. The penalty: removal from office of the ministers responsible. The separation problem becomes almost irrelevant if the country goes down the drain. We must all work to rescue and unite Canada.

Thank you for your attention. I trust these comments will be given consideration.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much not only for your presentation this morning but for your eight-page document you previously submitted, which I recall having seen in my office, particularly the 12 conclusions you had which I reviewed there earlier.

Questions or comments?

I have one that perhaps I'd pose to you, and that's this. We've heard the request from a number of people for the creation of a new body to be elected to develop the Constitution, calling it anything from a constituent assembly or what have you, and you've done that again this morning. How do you think you're going to get any better people elected to that body than the people who have been elected to the various Legislatures and Parliament?

MR. BURKINSHAW: I don't say that they would be better people. They may not even be as good, but at least they don't have a conflict of interest position. The people that would assemble that are telling the government, "This is the kind of government we want you to run over all us people," whereas if the government sits up there and makes the laws of how they're going to govern, you're going to end up with exactly what you've got now, where you've got a dictator at the top that calls the tune and everybody dances.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, it's a curiosity that's been growing in me as to how these statesmanlike people, excluding all currently elected people, are going to do any better job of coming up with a Constitution than is currently the process.

In any event, thank you very much for your thoughtful comments.

MR. BURKINSHAW: Certainly I don't feel that all our politicians are bad or that all our Senators are bad.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, no; you've made that point very clear.

MR. BURKINSHAW: Most of them are genuine people and are trying to do a job, but under the circumstances, the way it is now, if they don't do what Brian Mulroney says: out; go to the back bench, or get out of the party. I'm deathly against the party control system, because what's the purpose of having 295 people in the Parliament if they've got to vote according with a rubber stamp every time? They can't even express their own opinions. They like something or don't like it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, we're legislators, so in our Legislature Mr. Mulroney doesn't have that control.

Furthermore, there's one other little point I'd like to make, and I made it yesterday as well. It was my guess that maybe at least three-quarters, maybe more, of the pieces of legislation that go through our Assembly in debate pass with the unanimous consent of all parties in the House. There are matters, of course, which are debated and on which votes are taken on party lines, and I guess those are the ones you hear about. You never hear about the great number of pieces of legislation that pass through with everybody approving.

MR. BURKINSHAW: Oh, I'm sure that does happen, yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think that's maybe unfortunate, and it's because of the reporting through the news media and so on that you just don't get the good news.

MR. BURKINSHAW: I realize that, but I would also point out that when you get the three parties to all agree to something, you've got three people that are making the decision; they tell their people how to vote or out of the party they go.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I think that's a misconception, quite frankly, and I think I would argue it with you. The caucus system may not be perfect, but in our own caucus we debate at length what our policy will be, and I think the other caucuses would concur with that relative to how they develop their positions.

MRS. GAGNON: Yeah, I would just like to add to that. It came up yesterday as well, because people do feel left out, and they're not sure that their MLA or MP speaks on their behalf. But within the cabinet and the caucus system – and maybe those should be opened up to some public observation or whatever – there is always the opportunity to speak up on behalf of your constituents and to try and convince your colleagues to support your point of view. So we do speak up. Then, of course, democracy prevails and the view of the majority of the people in the room is the one that holds sway. But I think constituents should be assured that their MLAs do speak up within that system.

MR. BURKINSHAW: Oh, I'm sure there's a lot of speaking up and there's a lot of relationships go on. I'm sure that's only human rationalization, but in our present system it all comes

down to: why did Alex Kindy and Kilgour get kicked out of the Conservative Party?

MRS. GAGNON: Well, I think those are two examples which are maybe atypical and will become more and more atypical because I think all of us are talking about free votes, even a government member being able to vote against a government motion, which would not necessarily mean the government would fail, all of those kinds of things. I think everybody's talking about reform, and hopefully we'll achieve that.

MR. BURKINSHAW: And the Senate has got to be the referee, because you've got little provinces and big provinces just like the States. They have New York, which is a great big state; they weren't going to stay in the union if they had the same vote as Rhode Island in the management of the whole country. So they went for the Congress, which is representation by population, but then they have the Senate over here to make sure that it's fair, that this big province can't override the little one. That's what we've got to have in Canada, a referee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, you know that the Alberta Legislature has twice unanimously supported that proposal.

MR. BURKINSHAW: I'm aware of that, and I appreciate that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All parties agree on that, so that's kind of a good sign too.

Well, thank you very much.

MR. BURKINSHAW: Okay. Thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Waters.

MR. WATERS: Good morning.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good morning.

MR. WATERS: I'll put the placard up there. It tells us on both sides who we are.

11:25

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right. Please proceed.

MR. WATERS: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and thank you for allowing me to make this presentation to you.

Canada is facing three crises simultaneously. Our fiscal crisis is evidenced by a federal debt in excess of \$400 billion; there is an additional \$200 billion provincial debt – Alberta's portion of that is \$10 billion or so – and there is massive, continued government spending, which is forcing continued high taxes.

Our constitutional crisis is reflected by the continuing Quebec threats, and the most appropriate description of our political crisis is a quote from the Spicer commission: there is deep distrust, cynicism, anger, and frustration with our political elite.

The political crisis is the worst threat. It is one thing to have a serious problem – that's bad enough – but Canadians do not even trust their political leaders or institutions to solve the problems. That's why there has been such an outpouring of bitterness to the Spicer commission. In addition, that's why the Reform Party is experiencing such explosive federal growth.

By the introduction of the goods and services tax and the failed Meech Lake accord the Prime Minister has demonstrated just how morally bankrupt the Canadian system of representative

government really is. It is no secret that Canadians want constructive and positive change. In 1979 former Prime Minister Lester Pearson said that the Canadian Prime Minister is the nearest thing to a dictator if he so desires. On only one day every four years do Canadians have the chance to exercise their democratic rights. Between elections no accountability is shown by the politicians elected to power. The electorate is virtually held hostage by their representatives. Outside of that one election day, Canadians have no effective power over their so-called public servants.

That brings me to the purpose of my presentation: direct democracy; namely, citizen initiated referenda, also known internationally as initiatives. I commenced my presentation by mentioning the three crises we face: fiscal, constitutional, and political. Initiatives can help to resolve all of these by allowing citizens themselves to invoke or repeal legislation directly.

Let's address our problems. The fiscal problems are being exacerbated by big governments and special interest groups. Politicians, bureaucrats, and pressure groups work together to promote their own interests and not those of voters and taxpayers at large. Politicians give grants to pressure groups who, in turn, promise to support that politician at the next election. Of course, the bureaucrats are delighted to facilitate the process and administer the new program or handout. As an example of that, take a special group of perhaps a thousand members receiving a \$1.3 million federal grant from the government. To the group that's a lot of money, but to each Canadian it's just a nickel, 5 cents. If the government withholds these funds, these one thousand people can and do focus their enmity on our 295 elected politicians. By way of illustration, I would use the example of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. When their funding was jeopardized, they criminally occupied the offices of the Secretary of State. After only six days the federal government capitulated to a handful of militant females and restored all their funding, rightly or wrongly. That is what leads to bigger government and continued, out-of-control spending. If, however, a majority of Canadians voted to rescind all special interest group funding in total, our example group of a thousand people could not coerce the entire Canadian population into restoring it. Initiatives are a major way to cut our fiscal crisis.

Our constitutional problem. If the majority of the Quebec population votes to leave Canada, do our politicians propose to ignore that vote or, even worse, keep them in Canada by force? Of course not. The voice of the people must be respected. In Quebec the initiative will have its way.

Finally, our political crisis. The initiative process functions as a form of external discipline on our elected representatives. It does not replace the process of governing, which is why politicians are elected in the first place, but it does help to ensure that they do represent the voters who put them into power, and if self-serving legislation happens, the representatives know that the electorate has the ability to overrule their indulgences. If we can regulate our politicians, then our confidence in them will be increased and our political crisis diminished. Remember that good representatives have nothing to fear from initiatives.

I'd like just to briefly discuss the worldwide history of initiatives. In Switzerland they have been used since the Middle Ages, and Switzerland is considered by many to have the most stable and effective government going. In Australia, a constitutional monarchy and a parliamentary democracy like Canada, no constitutional changes are allowed without citizen input through referenda. In the United States 23 out of 50 states use initiatives regularly. In Canada we have had only one national

referendum, with regards to the draft in World War II, and that fizzled after a year or two. Newfoundland asked its voters if they should join Canada in 1947, and of course Quebec had its famous question in 1981. Previously in Alberta, from 1913 to 1958, we had what was called the Direct Legislation Act. Only two or three questions were asked, and those were on daylight saving time and liquor laws. Other provinces had, but discarded, referenda legislation.

Now current developments. On Thursday last the Premier of B.C. said the question of recall and citizen initiated referenda will be decided by the voters at the next election. This historic decision demonstrates a trust in the electorate long overdue. In 1990 British Columbia used a referendum to decide on education funding. In April of this year in Saskatchewan, plebiscites and government initiated referenda were introduced. In Alberta, in an April Gallup poll of this year, by an 11 to 1 majority Albertans said they would support a political party espousing initiatives. Direct democracy is becoming increasingly politically popular. The pendulum is swinging towards the use of initiatives and the true democratic process.

Alberta has had a long and courageous history of political leadership. The Reform Party is an example, and the first Canadian elected Senator, the only Canadian elected Senator. Alberta has the opportunity to follow the lead of British Columbia by asking its voters whether they support initiatives. As a basic minimum, any new constitutional changes which are designed for the people should be ratified by the people. Leading Alberta into the 21st century will require a political party with the support and trust of the people of Alberta. Direct democracy through initiatives will do that. Direct democracy, ladies and gentlemen, is a good idea, whose time has come.

Thank you very much. Are there any questions?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. I think there will be some questions.

Fred Bradley, Bob Hawkesworth.

MR. BRADLEY: You've obviously done a lot of work with regards to initiatives. Have you got any information or studies regarding the costs of initiatives? I understand that in some of the U.S. states, the fund-raising that goes on by lobby groups on either side of these initiatives can become extremely expensive. Also, do you have any information or have you looked at any studies that there may be regarding the number of questions that are put to initiative and voter turnout, how many people actually fill out all those initiatives and vote, and that impact on voter turnout? I know in the States there have been examples of some states having over 120 issues on a ballot, and it becomes, I think, very confusing to some of those citizens in terms of voting.

MR. WATERS: The two questions were: one, the cost; and second, the number of questions, right?

MR. BRADLEY: The costs in terms not only of carrying them out but also of the campaigns that go on on either side of these initiatives.

MR. WATERS: Yes. Well, okay. The cost of a vote is roughly 3 and a half million dollars in Alberta, I gather, speaking to the Chief Electoral Officer. That's what the last one cost. He guesstimates that it would be around 2 and three-quarters million dollars to have an initiative vote. That's expensive.

Now, just by having the vote – how would I explain this? Any group that wants to promote the vote via a petition which forces a referendum vote would have to raise the funds themselves. If there is enough desire for it among the people, then the people will raise the money. If there isn't enough desire for it, then the people will say, "No, we're not interested; you can't have a vote." So it won't ever come to forcing, for example, the people of Alberta to pay for a general vote at a referendum. But any self-funding that they raise, that's their own thing. Certainly no government is going to sponsor it, no union – oh, I guess the unions might sponsor it – but if it does come to a vote, no matter how much money they've spent, the people of Alberta will say, "We support this idea," or "We don't support this idea."

11:35

Now, the second part of that question was the number of questions on a ballot. The international model for initiatives says roughly 3 percent of the electorate signing a petition, which triggers a vote. That's called a threshold number. California has gone into the business in the California style. They've gone into the business of referendum voting, and companies are making money doing it. They say: "We don't care what the question is. How many signatures do you want on the petition? For a dollar a signature or for whatever it is, we'll get it for you." As far as getting a threshold number of signatures required to force a vote, that number of 3 percent is a rough number. If it's decided, as in California's case, that too many petitions are being held on immaterial matters, then you can raise the threshold to perhaps 4 percent or 6 percent or some number. If people are saying there are causes and not enough people are signing them, maybe drop it. So it's that threshold number, which is variable, which can determine the number of questions on the vote.

MR. BRADLEY: Just as a follow-up, do you have any concern about vested interest groups putting millions of dollars into explaining their side of a case versus the other side not getting the same objectivity?

MR. WATERS: Back to the California example. Last year or in '89 the politicians had a term limitation question, and they were proposing to eliminate the two-term limit on their positions. They raised approximately \$10 million through the business elite, the Hollywood elite, the media, who were all supporting them. That was their advertising campaign, saying that it's a good thing to let us have an indefinite term in office, and the people overwhelmingly defeated it, overwhelmingly being 68 percent or something. So the common sense of the people will prevail no matter how much marketing and advertising is done saying this is the right thing. People, when they go to the ballot box, will say it's right or wrong. They know in their hearts it's right or wrong, and being swayed by advertising won't do it to them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Bob Hawkesworth, Dennis, and Barrie.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you don't mind me asking you, Mr. Waters, Waters is a well-regarded and well-respected name in political circles in the province. Is there any connection?

MR. WATERS: Yeah; my father is the Senator.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Would you convey our best wishes to him at this time with his illness, and a speedy recovery to him. I think that comes from all of us.

MR. WATERS: I'd be happy to. Thank you.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: The question I wanted to ask you this morning – you've indicated referendum and initiative as a way of sort of controlling our politicians, if I could quote from your brochure, as a way of achieving direct democracy. Other Albertans who've come before our committee in the last several weeks and months have made reference to the question of recall as another way of achieving the same thing. You haven't spent quite the same time talking about that as an option here this morning. I'm just wondering what the position of your association is on that question. Was there some reason why you maybe didn't focus in on the recall question as much as you did, perhaps, on the initiative?

MR. WATERS: From Albertans for Responsible Government's position the question of recall is a adjunct to the question of citizen initiated referenda to initiatives. If we have initiatives and there is enough demand for some kind of recall provision, then the people will sign a petition, get the 3 percent, force it to a vote, and if the majority of Albertans say yes, then a recall provision would be legislated. But ARG has no particular axe to grind. We're not presenting any particular proposal. All we're saying is that the people should have a right to be heard between elections through the power of initiatives.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Do you think the fact that this has surfaced more recently is a question of basic flaws in the system, or is it just the personalities at the moment in our political history who are occupying critical leadership positions? Is it a systemic flaw or – I suppose it would be easy to say it's a combination of both. But this is something that's emerged recently. I'm just wondering if it's more a connection or a function of the kind of political leadership we're getting as opposed to something endemic or, particularly, systemic flaws in our way of government.

MR. WATERS: I don't know. How's that for a short answer?

MR. HAWKESWORTH: That's honest; I appreciate that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

Dennis and Barrie. Everybody wants to ask a question. Also, we'll make sure everybody gets in.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Waters, in response to Mr. Bradley's questions regarding the costs, I'm wondering if you could just clarify a couple of things. Do you think there should be any limit on the kind of petition or the kind of plebiscite that would be there? Are there areas like the Constitution and so on where there has to be a plebiscite and other areas where that wouldn't be practical because the groups would be unbalanced in raising that communication cost?

MR. WATERS: I think any item, I would call it – I don't want to call it a piece of legislation – any idea that is strong enough to attract 70,000 votes or 70,000 signatures, which would trigger the vote, should be allowed to be voted on. Anything that is that substantial that it garners 70,000 signatures is substantial, be

it whatever. You know, I can't think of something that shouldn't be covered by the people.

MR. ANDERSON: If I can go back to Fred's concern about the costs and your answer to that, I would agree that in a question such as extending a term of office, a campaign might not be able to sway the minds and hearts of the population. But in a question such as whether we spend dollars for social services or we don't or in other areas where information is clearly required for people to make the decision, it's not just one of moral suasion. Isn't there a possibility that people could be swayed by the dollars involved and won't get the information to make the choice on the other side?

MR. WATERS: That's possible, but people – Albertans, Canadians, the electorate – rely on media reporting to give, hopefully, fair and balanced coverage of both sides of any particular event so they will be an "informed" population and be able to make the decision on their own. Now, certainly if you pick something that tugs at the heartstrings, say the health care costs, and people say that in order to get such and such we're going to have to raise taxes to pay for it – the electorate always hate any mention of higher taxes – maybe that's a good thing. Maybe the government's got to look and say, "Where else can we trim?" Or maybe whoever's proposing these higher costs has got to say: "People, look at what we've got. We've got to raise taxes if you want to have the following facilities."

MR. ANDERSON: Okay. Thank you. Just one last clarification. When you say direct democracy, you're only referring to this plebiscite? You're not talking about a new form of government or electing directly the Prime Minister, that sort of thing.

MR. WATERS: No, absolutely not. I'm just saying . . . Well, you use the word "plebiscite." A plebiscite is government initiated, saying, "What do you think of the decision we've made?" A referendum – again it's government initiated – says, "What do you think of the decision we're thinking of making?" What I'm proposing, or what Albertans for Responsible Government is proposing, is citizen initiated referenda, where any piece of legislation can be enacted or revoked by enough signatures, by a majority of the population.

MR. ANDERSON: Okay. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Everybody wants to get in except Ms Betkowski.

MS BETKOWSKI: Don't take offence.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But we are being pressed for time, so I'd ask our colleagues to be brief and you to be brief in response as well. Thanks.

Barrie.

MR. CHIVERS: Mr. Waters, unfortunately, you're very popular; your topic's very popular.

I'm just wondering. Practically speaking, one use of a citizen initiated referendum or a referendum that could be initiated by government would be in the context of constitutional reform. Now, I can understand a referendum on, for example, fluoridated water: are you in favour of, or are you opposed to, the addition of fluoride to water? Now, that's a very simple, neat, complete subject matter. It may raise a whole host of subissues,

but you could get an expression of opinion one way or the other by asking that kind of question.

When you're dealing with constitutional reform, would you envision that it would be dealt with as yes or no on an entire package, or would it be item by item, clause by clause, subclause by subclause? It's a very comprehensive subject matter covering wide-reaching differences of opinion. For example, there have been people that have presented views on fetal rights to us. There have been others who have suggested that freedom of information should be entrenched in the Charter, that environmental rights should be entrenched in the Charter. If you deal with it in a package, how do you know what it was that people were in favour of or opposed to? If you deal with it on an item-by-item basis, how do you weight the result of it in the end?

11:45

MR. WATERS: Well, I imagine something as thorny and complex as a Constitution . . . The example that we use is the Income Tax Act, which is a million words or more and growing every year. No one person can understand the whole Income Tax Act. I don't imagine any one person can understand all the implications of the Constitution. We have the Supreme Court of Canada which interprets every so often their latest understanding of what the Constitution means. So if the people of Canada, the people of Alberta, or whoever were to vote on a Constitution, the proposed changes would probably have to be broken down into some kind of groupings, essentially, saying: "Here's the first change; here's the second change; here's the third change. Do you vote yes or no on the first change, yes or no on the second, yes or no on the third?" They're complicated questions, but in essence it's a yes or no.

It's a lot easier, for example, voting on that yes or no than it is to vote during a general election, where you vote for a person who has his own opinions, the party that he is a member of which has its own opinions, and the leader who again has his or her own opinions. So when you vote X beside John Smith, you're voting a lot more complicated than just a yes or no beside any particular constitutional item.

MR. CHIVERS: All right. Let's just examine that slightly further, and I'll try to be brief. On division of powers, a constitutional subject matter, that's a heading where you can say, "Are you in favour of this itemized division of powers or are you opposed to it?" But if you simply get an opinion as to whether people are opposed to or in favour of a specific package, you still don't know what the basis of support or opposition is.

MR. WATERS: But that's why the representatives have got to listen to their constituents. The constituents will say, "Here's what I don't like about this proposal, and here's what I do like about that proposal." Then it can be offered again to the people, saying, more specifically: "If you don't like it, is it because of this, this, and this? Or if you do like it, is it because of this, this, and this? Yes or no, yes or no, yes or no?"

MR. CHIVERS: Hence ultimately even that system depends on the representative relationship between an elected official and his ability to correctly interpret what his constituents' views are. Thanks.

MRS. GAGNON: I'll also be very quick. First of all, a comment, with all due respect to any media friends who might be here. I would not count on the media to always reflect objectively all sides of any given issue or to be informing or

educative of the population. I don't think we can count on that at all. It's part of it and it's very important, but I don't know that that's enough to assure that the electorate understands many, many issues.

My question, though, is about a grace period. We had the experience in Calgary of the petition and plebiscite on fluoride, and now less than one year later a very large group of people who were on the losing side want to bring it back and so on, or they don't want the city to implement it because the margin of support was so small. Would you have a grace period? Would you say, "We've decided this, and this is how it is for five years; we're not going to keep bringing this back every year"? Would that be part of your scheme?

MR. WATERS: In the draft legislation that we've come up with, and it is very naive because we're not lawyers, it just says that when the decision is voted on by the people, it will be fixed there for one or two terms of government, being three or six years.

MRS. GAGNON: So not until somebody starts another petition to bring it back.

MR. WATERS: Correct. To reverse it, for example.

MRS. GAGNON: But what if they do that immediately, start a petition or an initiative to bring the question back?

MR. WATERS: Well, again, if the people's will would like to have it that way, then why not let them have it that way? The idea is that we've got to listen to the majority of the people and not let the special interest groups run our lives and dictate which way we're going to go.

MRS. GAGNON: Okay. Second question: would you need a majority of the voters to assure that this is actually a reflection of the population? Sometimes we have 40 percent turn out; municipally we have less than that; federally, a little higher. Would you have to say that a majority of eligible voters have said such and such before it's binding on anybody?

MR. WATERS: I think the way we propose it is a simple majority of the vote rather than . . .

MRS. GAGNON: Of those who turn out?

MR. WATERS: Of those who turn out, yeah.

MRS. GAGNON: Okay. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those who don't turn out acquiesce in the results of any vote anyway is my view.

Next? Yes, Gary.

MR. SEVERTSON: Thank you. Mr. Waters, I'd like to turn back to the referendum on the Constitution. You mentioned that in Australia they have to have a pass in the two Houses but also the majority vote and four out of the six provinces or states.

MR. WATERS: A double majority.

MR. SEVERTSON: In Canada if we had a referendum on the Constitution, would it be a simple majority across the province



or a majority of, say, seven out of 10 provinces, or how would you envision that type of a majority?

MR. WATERS: Well, again you're talking that because of the population imbalance in Canada, perhaps Ontario and Quebec could vote one way and the rest of Canada would vote totally opposite and still lose out. What I'm focusing on is provincial size, but in something like a federal jurisdiction like a Constitution . . .

MR. SEVERTSON: I'm now thinking of the Constitution which, yeah, everybody's involved in.

MR. WATERS: Then I would probably recommend some kind of a double majority.

MR. SEVERTSON: What type of a double majority?

MR. WATERS: Well, a majority of the electorate and a majority of the provinces. So you couldn't be held up by two provinces, for example, saying, "This is what we want, and it doesn't matter what you guys want because we've got 80 percent of the population." It couldn't just be a simple majority of the vote. It would have to be provinces and electorates.

MR. SEVERTSON: Okay. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Well, we appreciate very much your presentation. It's a very intriguing proposal, and I've been reading some studies on it that have been done in the United States, in California, where it's probably used more than anywhere else. I'll share with you an article written by Dr. Larry Berg of the University of Southern California which is very interesting, and I've talked to him at some length about the issue. We're also going to be observing very carefully what takes place within the next few weeks in both Saskatchewan and British Columbia relative to this issue. I'll just tell you that in November I'll be attending a conference in Berkeley in California of the State Legislative Leaders Foundation, where the issue they will be discussing is initiatives. It's a two-day conference which is devoted entirely to that topic. So there will be some interesting advice that I'll be able to garner in that particular forum as well.

I just want to make this comment though. You made reference to the referendum in 1944, I think it was, and you said that it fizzled after a couple of years. In fact, the view is that the scars which that left are still here in our country because of the extremely divisive nature of that particular referendum. So there's a danger in that area as well.

Finally, I had experience with the question of the daylight saving time initiatives, having been a candidate in 1967 and again in '71 when the same question was put, and the answer was given differently in them. The one thing that puzzled me as we went through those campaigns was the huge advertising budget for the friends of standard time; I forget the name of the organization. I couldn't figure out where they were getting all the money, who was behind it. Well, as it turned out, some examinations determined that the funders against daylight saving time were the drive-in theatre operators of Alberta and the electric utility companies. Two special interest groups in 1967 were really able to defeat the referendum. So you've got to be careful about the special interest groups not controlling the issue, and there's a danger there too. I'm not saying I'm against

the proposal at all, but it does warrant serious consideration, and we're going to give it that very serious consideration.

Thank you very much for coming, and do extend to your mother and to your father our best wishes and our concern for his health.

MR. WATERS: Thank you.

11:55

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have a gentleman who was going to come this evening, Mr. Work, but he's coming to see us now. Thank you.

MR. WORK: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for letting me come to talk to you.

My main concern is two things. I think that we must proceed slowly with the reform, and I think we have to have leaders who we respect and trust to help us do the job properly. I don't think it's necessary that we have to do it this year or next year. I think it takes time to understand the various alternatives, and I do emphasize that. I think we still have time; we don't have to rush into it.

Our federal system is a good system, but some adjustments of the provincial and federal are needed. The Senate should be an elected body. All options should be reviewed. I think the decision on the Senate must be a part of the reform; it's an important item. Because Canada is so large, I think a province should have sufficient authority to deal with their peculiar situations. Having the right to opt in and opt out should be allowed; I have no problem with that.

Provinces are not equal. Each has different needs and priorities, which is natural and reasonable. "Different" doesn't mean unfair or inequitable.

I look at three cultures in Canada. We have the English, French, and the aboriginal. I see French being centred in Quebec, and I consider it as a distinct society with its French culture and the official language being French with bilingual services for English as they need it. Quebec is different from the other provinces, which is acceptable to me. I think it's unique to have an entirely French province. The English culture is spread over the rest of Canada, where the official language is English, and I see here bilingual services being provided for the French. Let the provinces deal with that item; let them decide how much of these services they need. Bilingualism across Canada is not required. I don't think we need it, and it's too costly. Let it be employed on a local basis as is necessary.

With regards to the aboriginal issue, I'm in agreement that we must recognize their land claims and get that issue settled. I would also support the Indian reserves having authority to govern themselves, perhaps similar to a municipality, with the idea that they have to blend in with the federal and provincial laws.

I've thought about the women's issue to see what we might need to address on that. I think we have enough laws that say women are equal and are to have equal access to all opportunities. I think what is needed is that the community has to accept and allow the women to participate in these opportunities. The other important item is that we need leadership from the government to encourage the community to acknowledge and accept the women. You've got enough laws, but now we need some direction, and we have to look to the politicians for that.

I think more recognition should be given to the housewife, who is a key person in the family to guide and develop future

Canadians. We see the problems that are growing in our teenagers, and it'll get worse. Courts and governments won't cure the problem. I think it has to be done in the home where it can be done more economically and effectively. I think it's the responsibility – and we somehow have to emphasize this – and duty of the family, not the government, to guide and develop the children.

I would also like to see Members of Parliament and of the provincial Legislature serve for a definite term; say, four years. I like the American style. I think that's good. I would also like to see that elections be called, say, every four years at a specific date rather than the way they're being handled now. I don't think the present system where a government can call an election in 30 days is fair to the people or to the politicians.

Canada is a constitutional monarchy, and the Queen serves as the head of state by way of the Governor General and the Lieutenant Governor. I don't think this is appropriate today, and I would favour we discontinue that. I think it's an expensive burden to the country and really doesn't serve a useful purpose.

With regards to multiculturalism, that topic comes up quite often. We do have, as I mentioned, three main cultures in Canada, but we also have many other people here with different ethnic backgrounds, which we are fortunate to have. I'd say let them flourish through their own efforts and be a part of the Canadian society, but I would support that the government stay out of any development of these multicultures and, as I say, let them develop themselves. Otherwise, I think what you might get is separate ethnic groups developing in the country and the governments fostering them rather than a blend of the cultures in with the rest of the Canadians.

I was looking at a timetable for reforms. As I mentioned, I think we shouldn't rush into it; we should take our time and develop it. Our present system is adequate for the time being, and thus it's not a matter of life or death that we adopt reforms. If it takes two or three years, that'll be fine; we'll manage fine. I would like to see that reforms not be concluded until after the next federal election, and I would like to see the reforms become a part of that election. That group of people then will be our representatives to develop the reforms rather than constituted assemblies or anything else. Let us have that election: it's based on a reform situation, we put in our leaders now, and we say, "All right; we're going to work with them."

I think I have reservations and a lack of confidence in some of the leaders that we have now, particularly in the federal government and some of the Premiers that were involved in Meech Lake. I think their performance was not adequate, and so I say, well, they should not be involved again unless we have confirmed them by an election. I'm sure you've heard from many people that we do lack confidence in some of the politicians. Things like patronage and items like that may sound small, but they are an indication to me that things aren't being exercised with proper judgment, and that seems to erode your confidence. So that's something I'd like to stress and would like to see happen so that we as people have a little more confidence in our politicians.

Then I think that not only are the politicians to blame on some of these things but also that the public, as myself, has to share in some of this blame and problems that are going on. It's not just one-sided. I think we're quick to say, "Well, it's your fault and not mine," but we have a part to play in that too. I think we can have all the written Constitutions we want, but it won't work unless Canadians and the people contribute. I've been involved in business where you have an agreement and you have all the writing you want, but sometimes you don't even look

at it because you've got people that will co-operate, and I think this is what we're lacking right now. We have to look to Canadians. They're going to have to work a lot harder to keep Canada alive and to compete with other countries.

Very briefly, I think social assistance programs such as medicare are becoming excessive, and we have to start thinking about cutting back on them because we just can't afford them.

In closing, my last remark is that I guess in all of this I am again looking to get some leaders now to help us go through this constitutional reform.

12:05

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.  
Fred Bradley.

MR. BRADLEY: I just have a quick question. You said in your statements that provinces are not equal and they have some differences and you were in favour of an elected Senate. I just wanted to ask a question in the context of Senate reform. Are you in favour of an equal number of Senators from each province? Do you think provinces should have equal constitutional authority?

MR. WORK: Yes. I think that.

MR. BRADLEY: I'm trying to get at your comment that provinces are not equal.

MR. WORK: Yeah, I think provinces are not equal in some of the things they need in their everyday lives.

MR. BRADLEY: Circumstances?

MR. WORK: Circumstances. We might have more emphasis on certain things in Alberta as compared to, say, Ontario and Quebec. We may place more emphasis on a certain aspect of our education which another province may not think that important. So let us do it.

MR. BRADLEY: That's sort of your opt in, opt out. Do you believe the provinces have equal opportunity in the exercising of these powers?

MR. WORK: Yes.

MR. BRADLEY: Do you believe in an equal number of Senators in a reformed Senate?

MR. WORK: Yes, I think we have to do that. I think that would be a good system, to have an equal representation in that regard.

MR. BRADLEY: Okay. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Bob Hawkesworth.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thanks, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Work, for joining us this morning with your thoughts. I've heard a number of people make presentations similar to your own in favour of fixed-term elections and to pattern our political institutions more closely with that of our American cousins. I'm just wondering whether you feel the time has come. Our economies are now becoming more and more integrated into one economy. I'm wondering if you feel that perhaps there

aren't any really significant reasons left why our political institutions should be separate. Have you given any thought to us perhaps becoming states, joining the Americans?

MR. WORK: No. I wouldn't like to see that.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Just to try and help me define what makes us different or what makes this project of Canada unique or worth while, if you don't feel that we should do that, what are your reasons for saying that we should maintain separate political institutions?

MR. WORK: You know, I think what we have has just been a part of our life. It's a system that we think is good. There are some differences in the way we do things -- not too much, but there is a difference in the way we do things. We have a little different heritage, and I'd like to keep that. I really don't see that it would serve any purpose to become part of the United States. I just feel that it wouldn't be a good thing.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Okay. Good. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Barrie.

MR. CHIVERS: Mr. Chairman, the area I was going to cover has been covered.

Thank you, Mr. Work.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Work. One of the comments you made related to the role of the monarchy in modern society. We've had differing opinions on this. Many people feel that that is a very real distinction between Canada and the United States, and to remove the monarchy would just bring us closer to becoming part of the United States. What would you replace the monarch with as a head of state? There's not a country in the world that doesn't have a head of state, be it an elected President, as in the United States, or a monarch, somebody that carries out that function.

MR. WORK: Well, take, for example, Alberta. You don't really notice the Lieutenant Governor. You could very easily do without the Lieutenant Governor.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would the power, then, of the Lieutenant Governor shift to the Premier?

MR. WORK: Things that have to be approved by the Lieutenant Governor are done by the cabinet or the Premier, and the same with the Governor General. It doesn't really serve much of a purpose. It's a figurehead, but it doesn't really serve any purpose.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, in constitutional law and in a constitutional monarchy it certainly does. In law the monarch, the Senate, and the House of Commons are in fact equal partners in determining the passage of legislation. In any event, I just wondered what type of figurehead, whether you wanted to have an elected President or a . . .

MR. WORK: I think you can get along without it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, that's an interesting theory.

In any event, thank you very much for your thoughtful presentation, and I think you're really concerned about continuing to be a Canadian.

MR. WORK: Sure. I'd like that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

Well, gentlemen and lady, I think we are ready to adjourn for lunch.

[The committee adjourned at 12:11 p.m.]

