

Routine Proceedings

UN's 50th anniversary celebrations scheduled for October 24, 1995. But October 24, 1995 is today, and what is the government tabling? Nothing, nothing tangible on promoting human rights and democracy. What an opportunity lost by Canada.

• (1015)

These guidelines were to serve as inspiration for new legislation and regulations to govern the transactions of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, CIDA, NGOs and business corporations with states belonging to the international community.

We felt that Canada's foreign policy, as it concerns democracy and human rights, should be more consistent and absolutely honest and open, so as to maintain the respect and prestige Canada had acquired, which a sovereign Quebec would certainly have been able to perpetuate.

Today there is every indication that this will be the case if Quebecers vote in favour of sovereignty on October 30. More than ever before, and this is again borne out today, it is high time that Quebec was finally able to participate fully in international politics, realize its aspirations and defend its own interests. Faithful to its democratic values of openness and tolerance, Quebec fully intends to stress greater concern for humanitarian aid and equality among nations.

This brings me to my second point, the universal aspect of the UN and the lessons to be learnt. I would like to refer now to several quotes from the secretary general of the United Nations' speech on nationalization and globalization at the first conference of young leaders, May 24, 1992.

The timely words of the UN secretary general are even more timely today. He said: "In order to enter into a relationship with another, we must first be ourselves. For that reason, the first prerequisite for the proper globalization of our modern life is a solid sense of identity. Excessive or misunderstood globalization might result in the creation of a kind of cultural soup, one uniform culture, which would do nothing positive for the world".

A sound sense of identity. Such was the message of the secretary general of the United Nations. This in fact is really the code for access to the world, a body of cultural references. According to the secretary general, the United Nations is that body of cultural references.

Now, what is the situation concerning cultural identity and cultural reference for Canada and Quebec? English Canada, we agree, needs solid anchor points in order to cope with the invasive American culture. Quebecers, on the other hand, base their identity on Quebec first and foremost. Therein lies Canada's whole problem; it is based on the assumption of a single

nation, with one and the same culture, the so-called Canadian culture.

This denial of the existence of Quebec as a historically constituted nation disavows the existence of two founding peoples. Canada is, therefore, having serious problems defining itself. It is, in fact, a country still in search of an identity. Its existential problem is that it is torn in two directions by a dual identity. Recalling the words of John A. McDonald at the time Canada was created: "We have created Canada; now we must create Canadians", we in Quebec are saying "We have created Quebecers; now we must create Quebec".

To return to my main theme, the concept of the nation-state: a nation is, first and foremost, a shared desire for a shared life. It is the first step toward universalism. Universalism itself, therefore, is nourished by nation states. The secretary general's speech illustrated the value of another underlying principle of universality, and that is sovereignty. He expressed it as follows: It is the art of making unequal powers equal. Without state sovereignty there is a danger of chaos, a danger of destroying the very instruments of international co-operation".

• (1020)

He continued as follows: "A world in order is made up of independent nations, each open to the other, respecting their differences and their similarities".

This is one of the most essential messages, perhaps the most essential one, we can glean from the United Nations Organization, that great international institution which embodies these essential values more than any other body. This is why we believe that a sovereign Quebec will be able to participate fully in international life in its own right, bolstered by a solid identity, a solid anchor point, a single and unique cultural reference. Then it will be able to communicate with other nations, with the universal, to use the terms of the UN secretary general. It will do so by assuming its fair share of the obligations imposed upon it by its allegiance to the values of democracy, peace and justice.

There is no doubt whatsoever that this is the spirit within which a sovereign Quebec will assume its responsibilities on the international scene. Since Quebec is faithful to these values, there is no doubt in our minds that the United Nations will open its doors wide to us the day after our accession to the status of a sovereign state.

[English]

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago the charter of the United Nations mapped out many high principles. These were noble aspirations but the reality of the UN has not lived up to that dream.

For decades the UN has remained incapable of acting forcefully to achieve those principles. The primary problem is that it cannot adequately finance its operations. If the UN is to respond to the many global problems which exist it must have sufficient