

Under this rule, not only does the Speaker have a right, he has an obligation.

In my opinion there was nothing improper in what Senator Kinsella did, nor did Senator Ottenheimer or Senator Lynch-Staunton act improperly.

Accordingly, I rule that there is no prima facie case of breach of privilege with respect to the matter raised by Senator Cools.

Finally, I am still considering Senator Kinsella's point of order raised on October 19. I will give my ruling soon.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

NATIONAL UNITY

RESULTS OF QUEBEC REFERENDUM—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Donald H. Oliver rose pursuant to notice of Wednesday, November 1, 1995:

That he will call the attention of the Senate to the results of the Referendum of October 30, 1995 in Quebec.

He said: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to an inquiry that I put on the Order Paper to permit honourable senators an opportunity to express their views and concerns on the future of a united Canada, in view of the troubling results of the recent referendum in Quebec.

The Canada that I know and love includes Quebec. The Canada that the United Nations has a habit of calling "the best country in the world" includes Quebec. The country that makes us proud to flash our Canadian passports when abroad includes Quebec.

Why am I, a unilingual politician from Nova Scotia, so concerned about Quebec's separation? It is because Quebec's contribution to our daily lives, our unique culture, is quintessential Canada. To lose Quebec is to lose a bit of ourselves or what we have become.

You are all well versed in the Quebec Act, the tradition of the Roman Catholic religion, the French language and the civil law traditions in Quebec, but as background for my comments on the Meech Lake Accord, let me say a few things about culture.

My wife and I are attempting to become bilingual by immersing ourselves in French-language training at St-Jean, Quebec. Our professors teach us not only grammar and syntax, but have opened the doors for us to the richness of the cultural traditions of Quebec.

Canada has been elevated in the eyes of the world by the creative contributions of French artists, painters and artisans. The artistic genius of a multiplicity of Quebec artists is at the heart of what many around the world love and respect about Canada. These artists explain, in one way or another, what it means to be Canadian. They discuss that we have emotions, sensations and instincts that determine our actions and reactions, and they put it in such a way that they speak to all mankind. However, I do not for a moment rule out our liberal democratic traditions of liberty and freedom that distinguish us from so much of the world.

• (1500)

I have time only to touch briefly upon the influence of French culture. I am referring to writers, architects, poets, authors, composers, dancers, visual artists, pop and operatic vocalists and sculptors. The more I read and study the cultural traditions and the influences of Quebec in Canadian culture, the more I appreciate what being Canadian means. I am aware that today we have new artistic geniuses of such descents as Chinese, Japanese, American, African and other new Canadians, but let us not forget about the awesome contribution of the French from Quebec.

I have always subscribed to the view that artists, philosophers, poets, painters, writers, and so on, see where the world is going before most of us do. It has always taken time for cultural developments to reach people at large. You could, for example, see the French Revolution on canvass and in verse long before the actual storming of the Bastille!

Have we in English Canada immersed ourselves deeply enough in the works of contemporary Quebec artists to understand the soul of the French people in Canada? Art is a necessary and normal means of human expression. Revolutions in attitudes and values, unlike political revolutions, proceed mostly below the surface of man's actions. I am not surprised, therefore, when people near my farm ask me: "What do the people of Quebec really want?"

It may be instructive for we English-speaking Canadians to go back to Rousseau, Voltaire and Montesquieu. They encouraged us to have a new look at old institutions. Maybe there is a hope for a better social order by rethinking and restructuring some of our federal institutions. Is that not the lonely cry that we hear from Quebec, and is that not similar to the cry we are hearing from Canada's western provinces?

There are several things we of this body of sober second thought can and should do to help restructure Canada for the twenty-first century, the new millennium, that would not only be a modern symbol for world democracies but would also probably have the effect of creating a new united Canada.

Here are some of my ideas, for what they are worth: