

In the final analysis, it is the central government which must assess and evaluate all the factors involved in order to ensure not only the very existence of Canada but the mutual comprehension and the climate which will allow us to work together for the future.

We are assuming this responsibility at the present time by examining the situation as it really is and by recognizing the causes of the problem. We are fully aware of the situation.

Some still feel that, because there have always been difficulties between our two groups and because they have always been overcome whenever they threatened the nation's unity, we need not take the present crisis too seriously. A little patching here, a minor concession there - such methods have always solved matters. These people believe that time will settle the problems of today.

In my opinion, such an attitude is disastrously shortsighted. It ignores facts which are only too obvious. It is the inevitable forerunner of national disintegration. The time for patching is over. We must now face up to an evolution so rapid that it has left some breathless, and we must reorganize Confederation so that it will be able to meet the needs of the future. This work has already begun, and very soon we shall be able to move forward to action.

This is a task which, unfortunately, cannot be completed in one day, or even in seven. No one could make such a claim. This is a task which must be carried out with an awareness of the existence of the two main Canadian communities. For, let us be realistic, as long as French-Canadians are not convinced that they can continue to develop a society in keeping with their own aspirations and that they can truly participate in the development of Canada as a whole, we shall be subjected to the same friction which we are experiencing today. As long as we shall not have found, through a consensus representing at least a majority, a new constitutional stability, we shall be unable to go on and build the Canada of the future, which will guarantee well-being and equality of opportunity to all Canadians.

I said recently, and I repeat it again today, that we must do, and shall do, everything within our power to give French Canada full confidence in Canadian institutions. We must convince French Canada through action that her best chances for the future lie within one great new Canada. A strong Canada to me implies a strong French-Canadian community.

While we talk more and more about, and preoccupy ourselves with, the relations of French Canada with the rest of Canada, we must not forget the cultural, political and economic contribution of Canadians other than those of Anglo-Saxon or French origin.

It is important to remind ourselves that this group accounts for more than a quarter of the population of this country and that, when we talk of Canadian "reality", we must take it into account as a very important element in the building of the Canada of tomorrow.