

However, as you already heard and I am sorry if you are tired of hearing it, perfection goes against the spirit of democracy. I hope that Senator Lynch-Staunton will forgive me for referring briefly to Greece and to Solon, the father of modern day democracy. The only difference between Solon's Constitution which included a House of Commons, a Senate made up of aging persons of distinction . . .

Senator Molgat: An elected Senate?

Senator Gigantès: The only difference with our current Canadian Parliament was that elections were held every 36 days. Since the electorate was always assembled at the same place every day, elections could be held very frequently. After he had written that constitution, Solon was asked whether he had written the best constitution possible. He said no, I wrote the best constitution acceptable to Athenians. He tells us in his poems which he wrote on this experience and which we can still read today that both sides hated him for that constitution. Yet, that model of government survived to this day.

Democracy is a system where compromise has to be made between perfect models. Those who sell gas would like to sell unlimited quantities. Environmentalists would like to ban gas altogether. We have to find a medium term between those two extremes and both sides resent that. Voters do not choose the political party that promises Utopia but the one with answers repulsive to the least number of people.

There is a complication in a federation. First, all citizens must make concessions, and then the premiers have to do the same at the legislature level. Once all these concessions have been made, we end up with something which is far from perfection, though this is fortunate because perfection means tyranny, danger, inflexibility.

That is why I do not mind at all the fact that this agreement is not perfect. There is something wrong in this country, the best country in the world; and it is to believe that everything can be solved constitutionally. It is said in the Bible that God created a constitution, the ten commandments, but we still have problems. As Senator Castonguay said, and I agree with him, there are other avenues. There are political agreements between governments. A certain amount of fatigue will come into play. We will end up with something far from perfection, but the alternative is worse.

I would like to say a few words about Sir Ivo Jennings, a famous British constitutional expert, who was hired by Pakistan, at the time of its creation, to write a constitution. That was in 1948. He had asked for £50,000 in advance. In those days, that was about \$250,000, that is to say a lot of money. Five years later, he sent the government of Pakistan a letter saying this: Writing a constitution would be a waste of time, as it would not last very long. Yours truly, Sir Ivo Jennings. That was all he gave them for their money, but it was sound advice. Nevertheless, the government wrote a constitution, to be violated every six months or so.

I would like to say a few words about Mr. Bourassa whom I admire very much. He was widely criticized. I believe that in the circumstances he could not do otherwise. He understands,

as Senator Castonguay was saying, that the international economic situation is very uncertain. I am convinced that we are moving towards protectionism between the various trading blocs. Japan and its Asian partners are going to become protectionist. If you leave a group, if Quebec was to leave the group to which it now belongs, it would have to negotiate its re-entry, at a time when people would be less than welcoming.

Senator Castonguay is right to say, and this is not economic terrorism, that if the rest of Canada or, let us say six Canadian provinces including Ontario, say yes and Quebec says no, there will be such bitterness that renegotiating the re-entry of Quebec will be very difficult. It will take a long time and it will hurt everyone on both sides.

There is a group in Quebec that I do not even want to criticize because I am of Greek origin and because we owe modern Greece to a group of people who believed deeply and religiously in the idea of independence in the 19th century.

This notion of independence still exists, but it dates back to the 19th century, before we were joined by the technology of the world stock markets, before the global economy, before the creation of economic blocks. One of the 12 EEC countries is now giving to a central institution powers which in theory should belong to independent countries.

We can say such things over and over again, but the ideology of nationalism is very strong in some places, especially with a people that thought of itself as a vanquished people for such a long time. Before, we had the priests and the teachers, and we now have their successors in the medias, the singers and actors, all those people who have always dreamed of an independent Quebec. This is not an unworthy dream. However, I believe that this dream should remain a dream if we want the good of Quebec because we are living in a world where it's cold outside. It is not a good thing to get out of a system which works pretty well just to try your luck on your own.

However, this idea is very attractive when it is fed by a slip in the relations between the English and the French by the events of 1982 and by the failure of Meech.

Mr. Bourassa, a federalist premier, must become a kind of acrobat, a juggler to find his way in this maze, to appease his constituents and to put the economic facts before them without being charged of selling out for a few dollars. It is his duty to protect the welfare of Quebec and he is doing so as well as he can.

He was accused of not participating for very long in the constitutional talks. If I had been in his position, I would have done the same because what Senator Castonguay was referring to, namely the media coverage of what was going on, looked like the description of a boxing match or a baseball or hockey game. We were humiliated! We lost! My side did not score a goal when it could have!

At least, Mr. Bourassa stayed away from all that long enough to let things calm down somewhat. He has a very difficult task before him.