

Public Order Act, 1970

On Saturday, November 21, I met in my Montmagny office a young man aged 22. His first words were: "Sir, can you receive me even though I wear long hair?" His hair was long enough to reach to his shoulders. I stood up as if he had been the Prime Minister, I shook hands with him and told him: "You are here at home, you came to meet your representative. What is your problem? I do not care about your hair. I know you are a human being and that a heart is beating in your chest. I also know that in this heart there is something good and I want to help you." The young man replied: "I am jobless. I completed my studies last year in June and I am looking for work. Everywhere they ask me the same question: But, young man, do you have any experience? I am disgusted that the same question is always asked. Put yourself in my place. What do you think is going on in my mind?"

I kept him in my office for one hour. I tried by every means available to make him understand how confident we are in our young people and how prepared we are to make the necessary efforts to give them an opportunity to live in Canada, particularly in Quebec, not as millionaires but so as to meet their needs provided they be the regular needs of a human being.

When he left, that young man was satisfied. He told me: "There is a man who understands us, a man who has faith in youth." And on the same evening, I took the opportunity, on the occasion of a Canadian supper, to spread this hope among the young for they need to believe in the sincerity and in the responsibility of adults and if we all stick together we shall be able to dam the tide of confusion and disorder which is now rising in our province and across the country.

We must first assure the financial security and the civil liberties of the citizens in Quebec as well as in the other provinces for these values have an economic significance. We believe that today civil liberties do mean something, but in theory only. For a very long time our party has been advocating a more equitable distribution of incomes across Canada. It is time for the government to listen to our voice which is also the voice of the people who demand greater justice.

Now is the time for generosity, sharing, reform of the economic system, fraternity, and humanization of economic as well as social and political structures. It is time to make money serve the human being in order to remove the understandable feeling of frustration that the people have because they do not get their fair share of the national production.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, if we must consider deep constitutional changes to eliminate the causes of the FLQ in Quebec, we believe that Canadian society must show greater flexibility and liberality. Now is not the time for arrogance but for understanding. Our task is to build a country, not destroy it.

The legislation before us should not be used elsewhere in Canada to tell the population: The act aims at bringing Quebec to heel, and tell the Quebecers: The act seeks to bring the FLQ to heel, because, then, that one act would have two purposes.

[Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse).]

Mr. Speaker, I spent five days in western Canada during the summer recess. I went there, not as a member of Parliament, but with my farmer's overalls. I visited the farmers to see what the situation was. In fact, in that part of the country, I saw people who live quite comfortably and others of modest means. I was impressed to see to what extent the people in that area are well aware of the situation that prevails in Quebec, to what extent they respect French Canadians.

If people in high places, and in information circles, were more objective and encouraged that feeling of Canadianism, of brotherhood and understanding, we could far more easily and rapidly build a strong and prosperous country, for our energy would serve to build rather than to divide and destroy.

In addition, we firmly believe that the federal government should from now on proceed with constitutional discussions in a spirit of brotherhood and reconciliation. As I said before, the essential matter is that Canadians should enjoy a decent standard of living. The constitutional problem should not be an impediment to the self-fulfilment of Canadians, including Quebecers. Such is my opinion.

As for me, I love my province and my country. I trust most of my fellow-citizens and I am ready to fight vigorously for the survival of democracy through democratic means. But I wish to goodness people would stop preaching patience to us and asking us to live with misery in the midst of affluence. This is becoming disgusting.

The silent majority will also have to become sensitive to social and economic problems and to co-operate to bring about the reforms necessary in order to build a society where life is enjoyable.

As for us members elected by the people, we must tackle immediately the task of settling the basic problems which gave rise to the FLQ. Finally, it will be necessary to bring back within the fold of democracy the individuals convicted under the special legislation. We must at whatever cost devise a rehabilitation system so that these individuals will come to believe in our form of democracy and its values. Action must be taken to prevent Canada from being perturbed again as it was in October last.

I know that this bill affects a single group and I am deeply moved by the fact that it is meant for Quebec only. It is unfortunate for my province. I also regret that our suggestions receive so little consideration. I hope that the present problem will not make us lose sight of our main objective, namely, to further the building of a beautiful and great Canada, from coast to coast.

• (3:20 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): In speaking to the amendment to the motion for third reading of this bill, it seems to me we are again addressing ourselves to the heart of the question before us, that is to say, the manner