

S. O. 31

As one of a group of 50 invited to hear the budget speeches, I was very impressed with the effort put into this project and the vigour with which the students attacked this thorny fiscal challenge.

My congratulations to Professor Marv Painter and finance ministers Michelle Cocks, Roger Miller, Curtis McKenzie and Judy Karwacki, and the other students on a job well done.

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[Translation]

QUEBEC CULTURE

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, Quebecers from all political affiliations were stunned to hear the Prime Minister, a Quebecer himself, say that there is no such thing as a Quebec culture. Rather, there is a French and an English culture which he calls the Canadian culture.

The Prime Minister's simplistic view, which denies the very basis of his motion recognizing Quebec as a distinct society, shows that his roots in the Quebec society and culture do not run very deep. Given the comments made by her leader, it is surprising to see that the current labour minister, a former cultural affairs minister in the Liberal government of Robert Bourassa, has nothing to say on the matter.

Her silence must be a heavy burden on her conscience since, as the proverb says: "Silence is a form of consent".

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[English]

QUEBEC

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have no problem agreeing that Quebec and Quebecers are or constitute a distinct society. My problem is with entrenching it in the Constitution. That for me and for many Canadians creates a problem. Why should Parliament resurrect an idea that Canadians voted down in the Meech and Charlottetown accords?

I believe in the equality of all Canadians, that each province, each region and the aboriginal peoples are all distinctive in their own way. But the question of what it means to be distinct has no concrete answer at this time.

Some say it does not mean anything but simply recognizes an historical fact. Some say it means the courts when they are looking at Quebec's laws will interpret them in light of the distinctiveness of Quebec. Therefore it is an interpretative part of the Constitution.

This would be something no other province would have. If we believe in equality, then we do not believe in special powers.

Please, let us not go through this again. Let us get on with rebuilding Confederation with new ideas. Let us look at what the Reform Party has to propose for the future of our country.

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MARITIME UNION

Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, recently we have had some strange echoes from the past in regard to maritime union. Let us hear what the past of maritime union has been.

In his thesis on maritime union, John M. Wilkinson posed the question:

Was there ever in any one, or all three, of the maritime provinces any general or popular movement in favour of their union, as distinct from those inaugurated by official classes, such as politicians or those actuated by profit?

The answer is that, unless the situation has changed, popular support for maritime union has been virtually non-existent. Even the legislators who in the 1860s agreed to a conference to consider such a union did it without enthusiasm and certainly not in response to the express wishes of their constituents.

Because of its lack of interest in maritime union, Prince Edward Island has been called the reluctant province. History indicates, however, that it has been different only in degree. It has been somewhat more reluctant than reluctant Nova Scotia and reluctant New Brunswick.

Let me assure the House this situation has not changed. A recent poll on Prince Edward Island put opposition to maritime union at 70 per cent—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Bramalea—Gore—Malton.

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SEYMOUR SCHULICH

Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week a North York investor, Mr. Seymour Schulich, donated \$15 million to York University's school of business. His gift will pay for a series of undergraduate and graduate scholarships and up to five endowed chairs to study specific areas of business.

He said he believes every affluent Canadian has an obligation to give something back to the country.

He also suggested the federal government encourage more private donations by providing the same kind of tax breaks offered to American philanthropists, who get tax breaks four times larger than Canadians.

• (1410)

I take this opportunity to commend Mr. Schulich for his generosity and to suggest the government consider his advice very carefully.