

ism in Canada. We are a bilingual country, and recognition of this truth is essential to our survival as a country, but bilingualism will not by itself unite Canada. The government tragically under-estimated the difficulty of persuading Canadians across the country to accept bilingualism, and now the government seems, unfortunately, to be making bilingualism the heart of its program of national unity.

**Mr. Sharp:** Who said that?

**Mr. Stanfield:** I listened to the Prime Minister yesterday. I read the charter and listened to the Secretary of State (Mr. Roberts). I distinguish between the government's political strategy and its unification strategy. Its political strategy, outside Quebec, is very simple; it is Rene Levesque. The Prime Minister and the Minister without Portfolio will not be running in Alberta on language policy. They will be running against Rene Levesque; that is very simple. The government's unification policy seems to be bilingualism. Admittedly, it throws in some other things like regional equality and equality of opportunities, but with the regional disparity and the unemployment we have today nobody takes the government very seriously in those areas.

The government seems to be putting all its marbles on bilingualism, and that is not good enough. Canada is English-speaking and French-speaking, but it is much more. We must accept Canada's duality, and cheerfully, but we must accentuate the "much more", not by having a phony war on poverty, a phony quest for a just society, or a phony war against controls one time and a phony crusade for controls another time, and not by cynical deals which compromise the government's principles and its integrity. Let us start with a little simple honesty. We need goals which are both realistic and challenging, goals which recognize our right to differ and which recognize our right to be different but goals that sublimate our differences. That is our challenge. And I thank the House for listening to me.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. John Roberts (Secretary of State):** Mr. Speaker, I have followed the debate so far with great interest and some dismay. There have been many moving, eloquent, and challenging speeches. I am going to confine my remarks to the speeches made by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) and by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent), even though there have been other speeches which deserve response. I am going to do that because, to my surprise, the debate has revealed much greater divergences among the party leaders as to the approaches which should be taken in relation to this major issue of national unity than I thought was the case before the debate began.

It is clear that we are now embarked as a society on the process of a fundamental re-examination of our governmental structures. I am going to give some warnings and state some reservations, not about undertaking that process but about some of the dangers in that process.

### *National Unity*

At the outset I want to associate myself with the comments made by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) yesterday when he said that he, and indeed the Liberal party, do not stand for the status quo. Far from it; on several occasions we have indicated that we are committed to considering, together with the people of Canada, the possibility of basic changes in the direction of the country, in our federal institutions and in our constitution. I support that.

I hope that the comments I make will not be interpreted as an indication that that open approach is undesirable, but I want to express hesitations I have about the expectations which may be aroused in that process. The first reservation has to do with the idea of decentralization, which has become "a buzz word" or a magic wand, described by many people as an approach which will almost automatically resolve the difficulties which are facing our Confederation.

The Leader of the Opposition yesterday made himself the exponent of the view that decentralization of jurisdiction and administration is the proper response to the problems we now face. I think the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby gave the proper reply to that suggestion. In Canada we already have one of the most decentralized federations in the world, and in the last 15 years it has become much more so. Yet it is hard to say that in the process of decentralization we have abated the forces which have a tendency to divide this country. It is difficult to believe that further moves in this direction will automatically result in a resolution of the tensions within our society and that they will keep it together.

It is interesting to reflect on the analysis Mr. Parizeau, the minister of finance of Quebec, made when describing what led him to become a separatist. Mr. Parizeau said that the basis for his decision was his belief that Canada has already become so decentralized by way of giving powers to the provinces that it will be unable to maintain itself effectively as a single society and as a single economy, and that therefore he had to go whole hog and embrace the separatism philosophy in order to use the state to achieve desirable public goals. I believe he is wrong, but I think the reasoning which led him to adopt his decision—decentralization of federal powers having gone too far—is something which should be a warning to those who believe that the resolution of our problems could be found axiomatically in a further decentralization of federal power. That is not to say that we should not discuss decentralization. We should look at powers in terms of functional needs and decide which are most appropriate to which level of government. However, it would be a tragic mistake to believe that decentralization itself is a magic wand which will resolve our problems.

I believe that the same is true of constitutional change. There are those who embrace the idea of almost any kind of constitutional change as a means of resolving our difficulties. The fact is that twice in the past 15 years we have embraced constitutional change. We have tried that direction.

Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition objected to the federal government's "buying into" provincial areas of jurisdiction. He must know that at the Victoria Conference the