

*The Constitution*

Canada and to the end of the political system which we have had since 1867.

It is not enough for this Prime Minister to have ruined the Canadian economy, Mr. Speaker, to have dangerously reduced the value of the Canadian dollar, to have piled up huge budgetary deficits and threatened our balance of payments, it is not enough for him to have brought unemployment to millions of Canadians, fuelled permanent galloping inflation and increased disparities between various regions of this country. So many disasters have not yet satisfied this monstrous egocentric.

Now, he has to set Canadians against themselves. Now, he has to undermine the very constitutional structure of this country. He has to destroy what was its strength and harmony, namely, the presence of two levels of sovereign governments in their respective jurisdictions. He also has to deny the original duality of Canadian society. He has to burden the whole country with an economic autocracy whose weight is only equalled by its administrative incompetence.

The natural tensions between regions and groups so diverse are not enough. He has to have open war with the provinces. He has to crush all those who do not dare think like him. As to the members of his party, they have been crushed for a long time. He has to challenge all those who refuse to share his dream of centralizing hegemony and level out the cultural originalities that had been up till now a source of pride for Canada, what was its strength and guaranteed its social balance. To justify the rape of the constitution and our political traditions, the Prime Minister points to the failure of the last conference of heads of government. He is the only one to say there was no progress and chances for agreement in a not too distant future are inexistent.

Most participants at the conference said they had moved much closer on several points and compromises were still possible with renewed discussions and good faith on all sides.

That feeling was also shared by most newspapers and Canadian and even foreign commentators. At the same time, politicians and observers warned the Prime Minister of Canada not to try to go ahead anyway, even on the unilateral patriation of the constitution. But the Prime Minister turned a deaf ear, even to Mr. Ryan in Quebec. He persists, in spite of the recent progress made in talking about a definitive failure, not because there is no more hope for agreement but because he and he alone, Mr. Speaker, wants to regard it as a failure.

And this he has orchestrated for his own personal reasons and because he is anxious to get out of politics, as everyone knows. The Prime Minister wittingly engineered the scenario of the last conference and he astutely manoeuvred so the apparent results would be nil, so he could feel justified in referring to such a failure to better sell to the public his unilateral patriation proposal.

There is no need to recall here the confidential memoranda prepared by officials in his office, the existence of which we learned thanks to providential leaks. Clearly the Prime Minister wanted a failure.

No doubt he would have been most unhappy had the Premiers acquiesced to his requirements, because much more so than patriation, the Prime Minister wants to receive de facto full powers to better regulate Canadian society and shape it according to his own political designs.

The September conference was not a failure, far from it. But it was described as such because that was the Prime Minister's will, to justify his autocratic control over the unfolding of Canadian life. If that is not dictatorship, words have become meaningless, Mr. Speaker.

What the Prime Minister wants to establish in Canada, and it is important that Canadians should learn about it because this they will not hear from my friends opposite, is in effect a unitarian government, a central government with exclusive ownership over the instruments of social and economic life in this country. What the Prime Minister wants to establish before he leaves is a federal authority so powerful that provinces will be reduced to the rank of vassals merely there to carry out the will and the policies of the central body.

In his view, provinces should not derive their jurisdiction from the 1867 pact, under which a number of matters are exclusively their own. In the Prime Minister's scheme, the provinces must become mere administrative divisions responsible for punctiliously and silently implementing the policies and orders from the mandarins and the bureaucrats in Ottawa.

Such a vision of Canada I personally reject, as does my party, because it inescapably leads to the fragmentation of our confederation and the ultimate end of this country.

● (2110)

It stems from the Prime Minister's deep contempt for the provinces, a contempt that the present Leader of the Government showed even before he entered active politics and has kept showing for the last 13 years. Is there any need to remind anybody of the compliments he paid to Robert Bourassa when he was premier of the province of Quebec? My friends across the way do not talk about the attitude the Prime Minister of Canada had towards the Quebec premier. That would be embarrassing and I can understand that.

That is why, for instance, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, in the April, 1963, issue of *Cité Libre* for which he was a political commentator at the time, blamed the provinces for what he called the decay of the Canadian political philosophy. Why was that? Simply because, according to him, the central government has to take the provinces into account and make concessions to them. The fact that he wants to get rid of these structures and of the provinces is nothing new. Some people think that I am exaggerating? I will quote the exact words of