

*The Address—Mr. C. A. Gauthier*

Has he even imagined the distress felt by our forefathers, as well as by all French Canadians who still made up half of the Canadian population, when all the governments of western Canada, which were majority governments through the well-organized federal immigration policy, decided to abolish all the linguistic rights of our compatriots by compelling them to become English if they wanted to survive, after they had settled in those provinces? Even today, our compatriots cannot put in a plea in their own language before western courts. Not even in Ontario. This government knows what I am talking about since its supporters are presently suffering from this situation.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I cannot ignore the childish statement made the other day in this House by the hon. member for Timmins (Mr. Roy), who said he was very pleased with the linguistic situation of Franco-Ontarians. I think the hon. member should stop looking at his shoes and hold up his head to see what is going on in Ontario. That is the kind of complacent statement by white negroes which harm all those people who for the past century in Ontario have been fighting to obtain for Franco-Ontarians the very same treatment Anglophones have been getting in Quebec for the last 110 years.

That is what happens when a member wants to save his party instead of his constituents. He brags about the fact that in Timmins 40 per cent of the population is French-speaking and that they have French elementary and secondary schools. I suggest to the hon. member that if Anglophones accounted for 40 per cent of Quebec's total population, they would control all schools, whether it be secondary, college, pre-university or university. In fact, despite the low percentage of Anglophones in Quebec, just count the number of English universities in Quebec and the number of French universities in Ontario, and then let us draw a comparison.

Instead of inviting us to his riding, the hon. member for Timmins should visit with those French-speaking groups who struggle daily to obtain the same justice which Quebec has always rendered to its Anglophone minority.

No one can deny that the people in Quebec have been patient for over a century. For one hundred and ten years, we have been patient and Quebecers have been acting as Good Samaritans in their province in the hope of an anglophone conversion. And where are we now, Mr. Speaker? A Quebecer cannot visit the western provinces even today without someone shouting at him: "Speak English!" I ask all members of this House what progress their provinces have made as concerns respecting minority rights, and more particularly, as concerns the recognition of both official languages throughout Canada.

All sincere Anglophones will admit that there has not been in fact that much progress. Of course, there have been some attempts, studies, promises, agreements in principle, but all in all, what are they worth to people who have been waiting one hundred and ten years? Put yourselves for one minute in our shoes and in those of your fellow citizens who now live in Quebec and ask yourselves what would be your reaction and what are the reactions of this group of Anglophones who are

[Mr. Gauthier (Roberval).]

temporarily going through what we have experienced ourselves in the past.

Moreover, put yourselves in the shoes of our young Quebecers who have much less patience than we have because they were not under the same religious influence as we were and do not believe in self-denial and resignation in the face of discrimination. I would like to add something to make the Anglophones who advocate Canadian unity—and thank God some Anglophones advocate Canadian unity as we do ourselves—understand why Quebec is now less patient than it was before. I believe that if something must be done today, it is up to the Anglophones to do it, and this, on the economic level of course, since it is useless to try to make a point with someone who is starved.

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The young people in Quebec are hungry; they hunger for economic and social justice in Canada. I know that many have shown goodwill, but this is not sufficient, action is needed. First, our respective governments must be urged to hold meetings with the Quebec government to draft new provincial agreements. I fear that there will be no more dialogue nor any more hope and that would be serious for Canada.

It is not by referring our current problems to the Supreme Court of Canada that we will improve our relations with Quebec. Indeed, what about the Supreme Court itself faced with the precedents created in every western province in the past? If the government at the time did not dare say a word, how can it intervene today for a minority, while it allowed the rights of nine minorities to be denied. All this to convince the House that a confrontation before the courts will not settle present conditions, but intelligent, honest, free and far-sighted men will save Canada.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has spoken about the third option in order to warn all those who would venture in that direction. This is regrettable but we are among those who want to go in that direction, because we do not believe in his status quo although he had tried to prove that this is not a status quo but an evolutive status. It is evolutive in a sense that it will increase federal powers but regressive as it tends to diminish provincial powers. This is why we cannot accept it. What we would propose are reworked agreements with the provinces. I have here a very interesting article published in *Le Devoir* of October 18. If you will allow me I will quote you some passages:

The third option calls for compromises, states John Robarts.

The way towards Canadian unity calls for compromises and the members of the Commission for Canadian Unity will not forget it in their recommendations which are also inspired by various elements of psychology, sociology and economy.

Commission Co-Chairman John Robarts was in Montreal yesterday and explained to the members of the Canadian Club how complex is the task that awaits the eight members of that commission and how wide is the scope of their mandate.

"The commission, he reminded them, believes in the idea of a Canadian federation where the powers of the state are shared between two levels of government, both sovereign and partners under a single constitution. At the