

S.O. 31

[English]

NATIONAL UNITY

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, fundamental to Canadian unity are the issues of language and culture.

French speaking Canadians believe that Canada is a sacred contract between two founding peoples, French and English. More and more English speaking Canadians believe that this concept fails to recognize the legitimate place of native Canadians and the growing number of Canadians whose heritage is neither French nor English.

Can we reconcile these dramatically differing points of view? I believe we can if we face reality; the reality of a country in which English speaking Canadians are concentrated outside Quebec but also live in Quebec; in which French speaking Canadians are concentrated in Quebec but also live elsewhere in Canada, and in which native Canadians and Canadians whose heritage is neither English nor French live everywhere in Canada.

This reality defines the fundamental characteristics of our country. The reality makes not one part, not each part, but rather our entire Canadian nation, a distinct society.

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FORESTRY

Mr. Réginald Bélair (Cochrane—Superior): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Forestry tabled the first annual report to Parliament on the state of forestry in Canada.

I found the report to be somewhat misleading. It leaves the reader with the impression that our forests are in good shape. I believe that the figures in the report understate the problems of reforestation. The report emphasizes the progress and the laudable efforts that have been made in the last 10 years but seems to have forgotten that some 220,000 hectares of harvested forest land has not been sufficiently restocked.

Even though the net growing volume of our forest capital increased by 2.5 per cent between 1976 and 1986, Canada's productive forest land has decreased by 4.7 million hectares an area almost the size of Prince Edward Island.

I recognize the minister's good intentions. Yet, I also sympathize with him for not having the budget to support the initiatives that should be taken today to ensure the sustainability of our forests. The fact remains that we still have a lot of work to do.

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BALTIC STATES

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, on our recent visit to the Baltic states and Moscow, our parliamentary delegation was assured by an advisor to President Gorbachev that negotiations with the Baltic states, which had been stalled for five months, would resume.

Five days ago the Soviet and the Lithuanian negotiation teams went back to the negotiation table. Yesterday morning in Lithuania, Soviet troops moved in and began the occupation of a driving school, part of which was being used to house the national defence department of the democratically elected Lithuanian government in Vilnius.

This is not negotiation in good faith. The international community must not sit idly by while intimidation tactics are used and the rights of a democratically elected government are being violated.

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MEMBER FOR VERDUN—SAINT-PAUL

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, yesterday afternoon in this Chamber we all heard the words of the hon. member from Verdun—Saint-Paul as he informed us he was leaving the Bloc Québécois to rejoin the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada.

As an English speaking Canadian member of this House, I rise to salute the courage of the member in this most difficult decision. I rise to thank him. These kinds of actions by this kind of person will, in the end, help us save Canada.

All of us in this House, outside of the remaining few dwindling members of the separatist Bloc Québécois, stand for a united, free and strong Canada.

[Translation]

Thank you, my friend Gilbert!