

is fine to hear the Prime Minister talk about national unity in this House of Commons, but I am more interested in what his minions say at the grassroots when they get back home.

I remember when the right hon. member for Prince Albert was Prime Minister of this country, some Liberal notable said, "We are going to destroy him." What did they do in my province? They said he was anti-French, anti-Quebec. Now they wonder why they have a divided country, yet they come and plead in this House to make this a bipartisan issue. That is pretty hard for those of us who have heard—

[*Translation*]

—the Minister of State for Urban Affairs (Mr. Ouellet) say that he has found on many occasions in my province that the party which I represent here is anti-Canadian, anti-Quebec, anti-French. That's all very well to say that in Quebec, but it is a different story to make a point as statesmen must do before the House and the press gallery. We are here to state the truth and to find why my country is so divided today.

[*English*]

Between 1957 and 1963, Mr. Speaker, I heard the Liberal machine attack the right hon. member for Prince Albert in my province, saying he was anti-Quebec, anti-French.

[*Translation*]

Well, in the great speech he made in the House of Commons, the Prime Minister suggested that all members should cooperate, but in Quebec, he and his ministers, the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde), the Minister of State for Urban Affairs (Mr. Ouellet) claim that the only federalist party is the Liberal party and that to preserve Canada, we need the Liberal party. This was stated on several occasions in my province, but in the House of Commons they think that the country will be united after a two-day debate. That is not true! It is absolutely incredible!

[*English*]

It is all very well for the Prime Minister to come to this House this afternoon, read a speech—and I give him a C minus at the freshman level of university for it—and then fly out of the House while his minions in my province preach the worst kind of disunity, saying the only federal party is the Liberal party, and the only way to save Canada is to vote Liberal.

[*Translation*]

If Canada is divided today, it is because for the past ten years, there has been a policy for the Francophones and another for the Anglophones.

[*English*]

Someone who spoke before me said that after ten years of the present government, asking the Prime Minister to save the country now is like asking an arsonist to put out a fire.

An hon. Member: Oh, oh! What a good line.

Mr. Grafftey: It is a pretty good line. The way the Prime Minister is handling the national unity issue makes Mackenzie King look like a statesman on the conscription issue. I well

National Unity

remember meeting the Prime Minister in a television studio during the election campaign of 1965. I have known him personally for years and was a great admirer of his—as I still am in many ways. After we both arrived in Ottawa we would sometimes have coffee together in the cafeteria, as many of us do. We would sit there talking, in the days before he was even named parliamentary secretary to the then Prime Minister, the late Right Hon. Lester B. Pearson.

I do not claim that I was speaking for my party at the time, but a couple of years before Expo I suggested that we needed a modern constitution, suited to modern times, suited to Canada for Canadians. I felt this not only because we had gone through the quiet revolution in Quebec but because I was firmly convinced that while it could be argued that in many ways the British North America Act was flexible enough for modern needs, I perceived it was not. The problems we face today did not exist in 1867. I talked to him often about the necessity for a modern constitution, made in Canada for Canadians, by Canadians. He rejected that out of hand. He said he had come here to settle a few scores and that the British North America Act was flexible enough for our needs, and that was that. I wonder if he feels the same way now, ten years later.

Even if he did feel the British North America Act was flexible enough to adapt itself to contemporary needs, why has he for ten years confronted the legitimate aspirations of every region of my country? Is that not one of the major reasons for division in Canada today?

An hon. Member: Have you read the Victoria Charter?

Mr. Grafftey: I can read the Victoria Charter as the hon. member can.

[*Translation*]

But anyone can read the Victoria Charter, the speeches, the Standing Orders, one can read anything, it is the actions that count, it is the attitude, it is the sense of understanding that count. I can read the Victoria Charter as well as the hon. member.

[*English*]

This afternoon my leader, seconded in a great speech by the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald), put the proposition before the government that you can name task forces, you can talk, you can do anything you want, but unless a joint parliamentary committee composed of all parties in the highest forum of this land can be brought in a bipartisan way into the national unity debate, there will be trouble—real trouble. I say, you should not exclude us on this side of the House. Some will say I am partisan, but I find it strange that the Prime Minister should have delivered a poorly read, high school oration in the House this afternoon, and then flown off to the west coast. That was his total contribution.

● (2100)

An hon. Member: He has a schedule to meet.