

*The Address—Mr. Trudeau*

speaking Quebecers, the knowledge of English as a second language seems essential to Quebec's and Canada's welfare. But all Canadians, whatever their origin and in whatever part of this country they may live, should understand that the universal use of French in Quebec as a working language and as a cultural instrument, as a recreation and teaching language, is as natural as the universal use of English in British Columbia or in Newfoundland.

● (1700)

We should all be glad that Quebec is using all the means available to it to emphasize its French nature, strengthen its culture and ensure its radiance as long as it always acts with all due respect for minority rights, a respect that has always characterized the Quebec attitude in the past. As I said and I repeat, in a continent threatened by uniformity we should all welcome that effort. There are in us as in all human societies prejudices as tenacious as harmful. Persisting in believing that one is less of a Canadian if one speaks French or that the linguistic dualism and cultural diversity threatens the Canadian integrity is, as I have said, one of the most pernicious prejudices that continue to exist among us, a deplorable relic of past times.

We must get together to wipe out the myth of English unilingualism but we must accept both sides of the linguistic partition, the concrete consequences of linguistic dualism not only tolerated with more or less silent resistance but openly accepted, supported, promoted. It is obvious that the French language spoken by six million people on a continent on which live about 240 million English-speaking people, if it is to survive and expand, must be carefully attended to.

So one should not panic nor be content with a reaction of indifference to the efforts undertaken in Quebec and other French-speaking communities in Canada to promote and develop the use of the French language. For its part, the federal government will continue to do its large share to strengthen the French fact through its legislation, its policy in the area of culture, broadcasting, movies, even immigration.

And it was essential that the government of Canada, aware of its linguistic duality, projected a true picture of what we are, and that is why in the same sense as we maintain privileged relations with Commonwealth countries we wanted under the leadership of the minister seated on my right, the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacEachen), we wanted in the same spirit to strengthen the ties that bound us already with French-speaking countries. This thing must go on and we will soon have the opportunity to extend it in a new area. In fact, the satellite Symphony built jointly by France and the Federal Republic of Germany will be launched in December and I intend, during my next visit in Paris, in the next few weeks, to initiate a Canadian participation in the new international cultural exchanges that will be made possible through this instrument.

When the large majority of Canadians will have understood the importance of an active and earnest cooperation in the objectives I have just listed and will have put to silence all the bigots, the province of Quebec will no longer consider itself apart from the rest of Canada. Its

[Mr. Trudeau.]

own anxieties being removed it will be able to cooperate more fully than ever in building the country we are forming all together.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, if I had not moved a motion on Monday to continue this debate until the leaders of all parties be heard, I would not mind pursuing my speech to the bitter end, as it were.

Mr. Dinsdale: "Bitter" is right.

Mr. Trudeau: I think I will—

An hon. Member: Summarize it.

Mr. Trudeau:—summarize it, as the hon. member opposite suggests. I will summarize some of the topics which my ministers and myself will be dealing with in the course of the present session.

I have now spent a great deal of time talking about unfinished business which would probably carry our endeavours over the next few years. I would point out that I think without exception they were suggestions that the Leader of the Opposition reproached us for failing to deal with, so I hope I will not be faulted for having dealt with them at some length in response to his suggestions.

The other subjects are ones which perhaps are not so easily encompassed in a period of four years. They might take less and they might take more, Mr. Speaker. Many of them are not within the control of this parliament alone, and for that reason I will deal with them today. They concern suggestions made by the Leader of the Opposition. Native rights is one, the problems of poverty is another, and the problems of the status of women is yet another. Inflation is another one, Mr. Speaker. There will be other occasions for talk and discussion, and the subject of inflation, which is of very great interest to all members of this House, will be dealt with at some length by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) when he returns from Washington.

For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I will bring these remarks to an end, just using these last few minutes to say that if the Canadian people wanted action in this parliament, they are going to get action.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: They wanted a government which would face the difficult issues, make decisions and move Canada forward, and they voted Liberal because they knew we would do the job. We did not fight and win an election to come back here to play political games, Mr. Speaker.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: There is a French saying which I hope translates well. It goes something like this: one does not cross the Rubicon in order to go fishing. We Liberals have work to do and we are determined to get on with the job. I hope opposition members will share our commitment to action and will not engage in the kind of partisan irrelevancies which cost them countless thousands of votes on July 8. We want the confidence of the people. We are dedicated to the principles of individual freedom and