

lems, the solution can only come through close co-operation with the Federal Government.

#### Federal co-operation

I want to assure the people of Quebec, as I did the very moment after the election, I want to assure them that this co-operation will be forthcoming in every way. In the months that follow very soon now we will be having a whole series of federal-provincial conferences at the ministerial level, at the level of first ministers. We will have to renew the anti-inflation agreement; we will have to fight together to bring unemployment down; we will have to come to an understanding on the price of oil; we will have to determine a new equalization formula; and we will have to conclude agreements on health and hospitalization insurance: and we will have to conclude agreements on post-secondary education. Three fields, by the way, in which Canada reimburses the provincial governments for about 50 per cent of their expenses.

Well, now, we should know at the outset that in all these areas the discussion between Ottawa and the provinces will be difficult, but so they will be between the central government, between the Canadian Government and the other provinces, and they always have been. It has always been thus, that the provincial premiers come to federal-provincial conferences demanding more money for their provinces because, naturally, it is easier to ask more money of the Federal Government than to tax one's own taxpayers to raise taxes within one's own province. Then, of course, there will be the problem of the Constitution.

#### The Constitution problem

This involves not only patriation and amending the formula, but, of course, it involves the problem of the sharing of powers between the Canadian Government and the provincial governments.

On that subject, and because it seems to be current now that more and more people are thinking that decentralization would be a solution to our problems, I want to point out that the Federal Government, our government, has already conducted negotiations on the separation of power in 1968, 1969, and 1970. In the course of these discus-

sions we advocated a more flexible, a more functional approach to federalism, a more functional share of jurisdiction, and we will willingly undertake that dialogue once again. It was only interrupted, as a matter of fact, because some provinces, and the rest of us agreed with them, suggested that we proceed rather with the discussion of patriation and the amending formula, interrupting the discussion on the separation of powers, that we proceed with patriation and amending, because at that time it seemed within reach. But we will resume these discussions if and when the provinces want to have a discussion on the separation of powers.

#### Word of caution

I do want, however, to issue a caution, particularly for those who think that more decentralization, or a new separation of powers would solve our present worries. I say it is a grave illusion to believe that those who seek the break-up of Canada would suddenly cease to pursue their objective simply because the provincial governments have increased their powers in some areas, say, communications or immigration or fiscal powers, or cultural matters.

The question facing us is much more profound. The stakes for Canadians are much more important and the question is this: can Francophones of Quebec consider Canada as their country, or must they feel at home only in Quebec? And you know as well as I know that a new sharing of power between Ottawa and the provinces will never give the answer to that particular question, will never make a Francophone feel more at home in Toronto or in Vancouver than he does in Quebec.

#### Deeds will solve problem

Quebecers, like citizens of the other provinces, are proud. They seek personal fulfillment in a free and independent way. The central question, therefore, is whether this growth of freedom and independence is best assured by Canada, or by Quebec alone. Canadians must think about this brutal question now – not only think of solving it in words, but by deeds and through their attitudes; in the area of the language problem, of course, but also in the very important areas of regional disparity and social justice.

#### Challenge is now

With the victory of the Parti Québécois, we can no longer afford to postpone these questions by one generation, to put the problem aside for the next generation of Canadians, and in this sense, the crisis is real; the crisis is now, and the challenge is immediate. I believe that Canada cannot, indeed, that Canada must not survive by force. The country will only remain united – it should only remain united – if its citizens want to live together in one civil society.

History created this country from the meeting of two realities; the French and the English realities. Then these were enriched by the contributions of people from all parts of the world, but this coming together, this meeting, this encounter of realities, though at times difficult to accept, and hard to practise, this encounter has, itself, become the fabric of our life as a nation, the source of our individuality, the very cornerstone of our identity as a people.

Our forefathers willed this country into being. Times, circumstance and pure will cemented us together in a unique national enterprise, and that enterprise, by flying in the face of all expectations, of all experiences, of all conventional wisdom, that enterprise provides the world with a lesson in fraternity.

#### Abandonment a sin

This extraordinary undertaking is so advanced on the road to liberty, so advanced in the way of social justice and of prosperity, that to abandon it now would be to sin against the spirit; to sin against humanity.

I have known René Lévesque for many years, some 20 years. I personally know many of his colleagues. I respect their intelligence and their dedication. We all believe in equality; we all want liberty and equality and democracy for the citizens of this country, but we disagree profoundly on the means to be employed.

My disagreement with Mr. Lévesque, dating back some ten years, arises out of my conviction that there is room in Canada for all Canadians. He, on the other hand, probably not without regret – perhaps even with sadness – he, on the other hand, believes the opposite. He has, therefore, surrounded himself