

Business of the House

That part of New Brunswick which is home to the largest group of Acadians is in a state of economic distress and requires continued federal help. Although the idea of a separate Acadian state might make a few purists happy, it would cause a lot of hungry bellies among the workers. Furthermore, there is no guarantee that the rest of New Brunswick would react peacefully to such a proposal. Acadians need a Quebec in Confederation.

Therefore, what can we all do? We can create the national will to maintain Confederation. We must show the separatists that we want Confederation and that we are willing to fight for it. We must create a new social contract by which the rights of every minority and every group are amply protected—a social contract embodying a new constitutional arrangement; a social contract embodying the willingness of each Canadian to respect unselfishly the rights and needs of each other and of each region of our great country; a social contract embodying the goal of social and economic equality for all Canadians; and for us in New Brunswick, a social contract in which we work for the right of Acadians to work, to live, to receive justice, in their own language, and to ensure that they receive a fair share of provincial wealth and opportunities.

In conclusion let us return to the fundamental ideals on which this nation has grown and prospered—the commitment to provincial self-identity and the commitment to social reform. Let us get our youth involved in promoting and protecting these ideals. There is a great reservoir of strength in our youth. René Lévesque has offered Quebecers an equitable society but a racist society. Let us offer Quebec and all of Canada an equitable society and a just one. If we fail to make this fragile Canadian experiment work, we are unworthy of the trust our forefathers have placed in our hands. We are unworthy of the place we have proclaimed for ourselves in the world. We are unworthy of our nation. The future is in our hands. Let us not fail to bear the torch.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I should like to report to the House that we have had some consultations, and in order to provide additional time for this debate tomorrow we have agreed to devote the period from four o'clock until six o'clock to it. I should like to go further and say that I will call it as the first item under government business. If we get to government orders before four o'clock, we would have until six o'clock for the debate; but I should suggest that because we do not know what may intervene tomorrow—there may be a repetition of what happened today—and if we do not get to government orders until 4.15 o'clock or later, I would suggest we sit for at least two hours from that moment, even if it is beyond six o'clock. I want to assure the House that there will be no unhappy moments that we can avoid in any event.

[Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi).]

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I want to say that the minister is notably generous on his birthday. In the spirit of that generosity I should like to wish him a happy birthday and say that we concur in the proposal.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, we did have a very pleasant meeting at which we came to this agreement, and we are happy to concur in it.

I join with my hon. friend in extending to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) best wishes on his birthday. I do not wish him many returns of what he has been through on this particular day. However, I do hope his fortieth, forty-first and all his other birthdays, now that he is past the age of 39, will be happy ones.

● (1840)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have this opportunity to join with my two colleagues in this discussion, and I might add it is precisely with this kind of debate that we will finally reach a consensus and above all bring about unity among all the parties represented in this House. I should also like to join my two colleagues, in wishing a happy birthday to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen). Many happy returns.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Is it agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): It is so ordered.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, perhaps one point should have been made clear, that is, that there will be no private members' hour tomorrow afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Is it agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

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CONFEDERATION**DEBATE ON NATIONAL UNITY**

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Trudeau:

That members of this House dedicate themselves anew to the continuing unity of Canada as a free and independent country organized on the basis of a federal form of government with two official languages and a diversity of cultures.

And on the amendment of Mr. Clark (p. 7321)

Mr. Douglas Roche (Edmonton-Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, it is very significant that the Secretary of State (Mr. Roberts) who finished his speech a few moments ago did not attempt to refute the serious charge made in the preceding speech by the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Stanfield) that the Prime