

believed, and their voices made known and appreciated in Quebec and throughout Canada.

Now I want to say a few words about British Columbia, and the worth of this country. When British Columbia joined Confederation on July 20, 1871, *The British Colonist* of Victoria, a paper still in existence, had this to say:

To-day British Columbia passes peacefully and, let us add, gracefully into the confederated empire of British North America . . . To-day British Columbia and Canada join hands and hearts across the Rocky Mountains . . . let us join hands among ourselves in a friendly but firm resolve to begin our new political life a united and harmonious band for the purpose of making British Columbia—what Nature designed her to be—the Queen Province of the Dominion.

Have no doubt, honourable senators, that British Columbia still feels that way, and I include also the sentiment of a rather general but undoubted feeling of superiority over the rest of Canada.

The debates in British Columbia pro and con Confederation prior to the summer of 1871 were not for idle chatter. Many wanted independence within the British Empire. Many wanted to join the manifest destiny of the United States. But the confederationists won out in the end because, led by one of the most colourful people ever to be in public life, a Nova Scotian by the name of Smith, who changed his name to Amor de Cosmos—"lover of the world"—British Columbians had grasped, not merely an economic proposition, but the essential nature and concept of Canada itself. I have never seen, honourable senators, that concept more beautifully or exactly expressed than by Prime Minister Trudeau when he spoke on national television and radio on November 24, 1976. He said:

Our forefathers willed this country into being. Time, 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.

Honourable senators know that the great experiment of two communities, French and English, and many cultures living together in this Canada is an experiment for the world. It is an example to a world in great turmoil and pain of a country living in harmony and prosperity. It would be a great pity and, in the Prime Minister's sentiments, a great tragedy if that experiment in fraternity were ever allowed to be dissolved.

The session of the British Columbia Legislature begun in February 1870 was given over to the debate on Confederation. The Attorney General, Henry Crease, made an eloquent plea, and here I should like to read from the debates:

We are sandwiched between the United States territory to the north and south—indeed on all sides but one, and that one opening is towards Canada. Our only option is between remaining a petty, isolated community, 5,000 miles from home—

He was speaking about England.

—eking out a miserable existence on the crumbs of prosperity our powerful and active Republican neighbours chose to allow us, or, by taking our place amongst the comity of nations become the prosperous western outlet on the North Pacific of a young and vigorous people, the eastern boundary of whose possessions is washed by the Atlantic.

● (1500)

I believe it is clear that British Columbians in the beginning of their relationship with Canada understood what Canada was about, and believed in the dream of Canada. I assure you, honourable senators, that that understanding and that belief remain undiminished in British Columbia.

I would like now to turn to an emerging issue in national unity, the political development of Canada's north, the Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories. In the early 1960s I served as a member of the staff of the late Honourable Arthur Laing, then Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources. In that capacity I became well acquainted with the north and I assisted in the establishment of the Carrothers Commission to report on the political development of the Northwest Territories. That report was a landmark and led to the location of much of the territorial government in Yellowknife, with a resident commissioner there for the first time. Subsequently, it has led to a fully elected territorial council of 15 persons, of whom today nine are of native descent. In other words, honourable senators, in ten years I have seen a process take place in which Ottawa has given up a good deal of administration and control of an area one-third the total size of Canada. I have seen a real transfer of political authority to northern residents, both in the Yukon and in the Northwest Territories, authority exercised by them in a real, although not yet satisfactory, measure.

In the Northwest Territories, one of the territorial ministers, out of three who are also members of the territorial council, is an Inuit, Peter Ernerk, who is responsible for economic development and tourism. He is the first Inuit or Eskimo minister. That shows you something of the evolution of the native community in Canada. In addition, our recently appointed colleague, Senator Willie Adams, was at one time an elected member of the Council of the Northwest Territories, and brings us a real knowledge of what is happening there. I hope he may find the opportunity to speak in this debate on questions of national unity in the north.

Honourable senators, following May 9 and the release of the Berger Report, I pressed the government leader here for a debate on the Berger Report and its reference to a Senate committee so that we might have public hearings and the response of people in the north and elsewhere to the views of Mr. Justice Berger. Senator Perrault has indicated that this debate encompasses my concerns about national unity in the north and the Berger Report. Therefore some of the remarks which I would have made in that debate, I wish to make here.

Let me be clear that Mr. Justice Berger has rendered a national service in providing Canadians with his report, *Northern Frontier, Northern Homeland*. His work is seeing