

to its very survival within the English-speaking majority of the community. Our families, our communities, our institutions concentrated their energies on this survival. This activity then, operated within the group and such efforts necessarily resulted in the alienation of the majority feelings towards us, not so much wilfully as through ignorance or lack of interest in the French fact.

It is only in the last twenty or twenty-five years that the French-speaking group has acquired enough confidence in itself and in its own survival to assert its presence and concentrate its efforts on its development in all areas of Canadian life.

Since then, its institutions are packed with first-rate candidates in every professional, economic, political, social and national sphere. This presence is more and more tangible, and it is not surprising that the English-speaking majority wonders about this new self-assertion, because until then, it had shown no interest and it still offers a certain resistance.

That this resistance will be interpreted as opposition and intolerance in some quarters seems inevitable, just as it is inevitable that some elements of the minority will express very vigorously their impatience and their desire to participate fully.

If we realize that the constitution is good enough to allow at least the survival of the French-speaking minority, all our efforts must now be directed towards creating the climate that will facilitate its full maturity and its full development; there is no doubt that this Canadian identity we are all anxiously looking for will come out of it. From then on the French participation will be less deeply felt by the strength of its claims than by the worth of its contributions, provided of course that it is given by all the instruments which the French fact will need to ensure its own development.

This would be specified in a revised constitution that would be more closely in contact with Canadian reality.

In the same way that, throughout the world, forces built on the single premise of class warfare will wane, the day people of the world merge into one class of free citizens with equal opportunities, the minority that speaks of 100 years of injustice will be forced into silence when such equality is effectively provided both in our minds and our statutes.

A hundred years ago, governor general, Viscount Monck, stated before the house, which numbered 180 members at the time,

Anniversary of First Session of Parliament that legislation had to be enacted to put this constitution, which was quite new in some respects, to a full, reasonable, prejudice-free test.

The present parliament is only taking over in performing that task, by finding the legislative measures which will give the best chances of success to modern-day realities.

Let us put an end to the pessimism of a small number by reminding ourselves of the quotation of a youth of 23: "Confederation will be the grave of the French race and the ruin of Lower Canada", said that prophet of doom. Yet, he himself proved his saying wrong by later becoming Prime Minister of Canada. I quoted Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

And so, on this one hundredth anniversary, let us, members of parliament, live our act of faith by making of Canada our top priority.

[English]

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, the members of the New Democratic party are happy to associate themselves with the other parties in the house in noting this historic occasion, the one hundredth anniversary of the meeting of the first parliament of Canada. It is not without significance that this anniversary should follow so closely upon Guy Fawkes day. A former member of this house, the ebullient Gerry McGeer, once said that Guy Fawkes was the only person he had known who approached parliament in the right frame of mind.

The newspaper reports of that first parliament in Ottawa on November 6, 1867, say that after having selected the Speaker, the House of Commons went into closed session. While no records were kept as to the decisions reached then, the newspapers said it was their opinion that a decision had been made to close the bar in the House of Commons. I have no doubt this was in order to give effect to Sir John A. Macdonald's plea for a sober second thought.

In taking note of this important anniversary I think we have to remember that the problems which face this parliament are vastly more complex than those which faced Canada's first parliament. We live in a technological society, in the midst of growing urbanization, in a world which, as McLuhan has said, has become a global village. While the instruments at hand are most sophisticated, the problems are much more far reaching and terrifying. Yet I should like to submit to the house that the basic problem, the problem of human relations, the problem of people learning how to live together, is still the same.