

the time, located amid considerable scenic splendours and with a very bright future, and which was called Bytown at the time. Anxious to avoid any rivalry between Kingston and Montreal and between the two language groups, Her Majesty decided to opt for the scenic splendours of the small town with the bright future, and that is how Bytown became Ottawa, the capital of Canada. However wise, the great Queen, Mr. Speaker, did not have a clear, sharp and exact idea of the implications of such a choice. The new capital was on the Ontario side of the Ottawa River, at a stone's throw.

An Hon. Member: Lapierre.

Mr. Cadieux: Not Mr. Lapierre, no. At a stone's throw, Mr. Speaker, facing that other entity, Quebec. For close to a century, Ottawa grew, mainly English-speaking and unilingual. The nation's capital took form and was embellished constantly over the years, but on the other side of the river, Hull and its neighbouring communities derived little benefit from their immediate proximity to the country's core. To all intents and purposes, that part of the Province of Quebec was but a poor relative to its big sister across the river.

If I emphasize those historical data, Mr. Speaker, it is because they are the background of the relationship between the two founding peoples, up to the fifties. I hasten to add, however, and thank God for that, that a marvelous change has occurred since. Canadians of both languages initiated 25 years ago a huge effort of mutual understanding and equal sharing of the national heritage.

This is how, by mutual consent, we came to agree that the Canadian Capital should reflect this country's duality, and that in a nation whose two senior components were Quebec and Ontario, it was normal that Quebec be included in the concept of a National Capital. This is why, as early as 1969, a conference of Canadian Premiers held in Toronto agreed to the concept of a National Capital Region that included all of the Ottawa-Hull area. For that reason also, large-sized federal buildings have sprung up in Hull for some 15 years now and a number of developments made on the Quebec side by the federal Government.

All this is very well, and the present Government has the firm intention of maintaining and even enhancing the capital's development. We intend to respect fully the mandate given the NCC by the National Capital Act, passed in 1958, being, and I quote, Mr. Speaker: to prepare plans for and assist in the development, conservation and improvement of the National Capital Region in order that the nature and character of the seat of the Government of Canada may be in accordance with its national significance.

But that mandate, Mr. Speaker, which we have seen fulfilled over the years and by the various administrations, is subject to the unescapable constitutional reality. We know what constitutional problems are. Three different Governments are involved: the Government of Canada, of course, the Gov-

Constitution Act, 1867

ernment of Ontario, and, obviously, the Government of Quebec. And not only must constitutional authority and jurisdiction be preserved, but in the fulfilling of its mandate, the National Capital Commission has no absolute authority over the area as such. It must compromise with the rights, prerogatives, privileges and legitimate aspirations of the two regional Governments and 27 municipalities which also exercise their jurisdictions within the area of the National Capital.

It is in this multiple and varied context that we must approach Bill C-207. How could the House dictate its will to so many other authorities without jeopardizing the constitutional make-up, creating new tensions or provoking new confrontations at every level? No, Canadians have witnessed too many differences and confrontations between Ottawa and the provinces over the past two decades without our risking new frictions which could imperil the reconciliation efforts made over the past 16 months! Let us not give up what we have for some fanciful alternative. First, let us consolidate our strength and help our economy recover. After that, Mr. Speaker, we could address the issue of territorial authority over our National Capital. Let us have our priorities straight!

The amendment we are considering today is an old tune close to the heart of the Hon. Member for Hull-Aylmer (Mr. Isabelle) who serves it to us regularly each year, regular as Old Faithful, together with his project of a federal district more or less copied on the American federal district of Columbia. A similar formula has existed for quite a long time elsewhere, Mr. Speaker. After the United States, there has been the federal Canberra district in Australia. But has the Hon. Member for Hull-Aylmer (Mr. Isabelle) ever wondered whether the creation of such federal districts in these two countries had raised linguistic and cultural problems? Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is not here to answer this question. But has he ever pondered the problems which the creation a federal district would create here in the areas of education, social affairs, justice and urban Government, with 27 municipalities, two regional Governments, and three major Governments, including Ottawa, Ontario, and Quebec?

● (1620)

Mr. Speaker, it is an undeniable fact that, if only on the basis of our linguistic and cultural duality and of the jurisdictions guaranteed to the provinces by the Constitution, Bill C-207 reflects an utopia and even an aberration in this day and age. It would be unthinkable to start such a costly and risky adventure and one which is even contrary to the characteristics of each of the entities involved in this issue.

Who would give up what and for whose benefit, Mr. Speaker? We are all well aware that, human nature being what it is, each party involved would want to hang on to his vested interests and to protect his own advantage, because, as the saying goes, charity begins at home. Is it logical to expect an authority at whatever level to jeopardize its own identity when,