

National Unity

ans want the potential use of force to be completely excluded from the thinking and talking of all members of parliament and most especially aspiring prime ministers.

I think it is clear in the recent past that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), who in the 1960's made a valiant, well-intentioned effort to bridge Canada's two solitudes, to use that apt phrase coined by the Cape Breton born Hugh MacLennan in his novel of the same name, has been too inflexible in dealing with some of the constitutional difficulties as they relate to Quebec as a unique province in our Confederation. He has been inclined at times to hit Quebecers over the head with seemingly inflexible interpretations of the British North America Act. At the same time, in his well-intentioned bilingual policy his government has succeeded in alienating many English speaking Canadians by pressing bilingual policies in areas where English Canadians are in a very dominant majority, and by refusing to take constructive criticism, at least until recently, on how the bilingual approach might be radically altered for the future good of Canada. Admittedly, some of this criticism on my part is hindsight.

The Prime Minister seems prepared to gamble that the kind of federalism which he has always pursued can win a straight intellectual confrontation with Mr. Lévesque's idea of independence. But, as I have implicitly suggested, the fight may be more emotional than intellectual, and in that regard the Parti Québécois may well have the upper hand. I think it is important to point out that perhaps neither the independence as outlined by the Parti Québécois, nor the federalism as presently practised, responds to Quebec's needs.

Around the House of Commons it was constantly pointed out after the Parti Québécois victory in Quebec that only 41 per cent of the people of Quebec voted for the Parti Québécois. The assumption is that only half of those who voted really wanted separatism. What this type of observation neglects to state is that none of the parties which contested the November election, including the provincial Liberals, favoured the kind of inflexible federalism traditionally expounded by the Prime Minister.

Whether or not the Prime Minister, or English speaking Canada, like the notion, Quebec's political leaders have moved away from that style of federalism in which Quebec is a province just like the others. I do not think that patriation of the constitution, or the whole question of the future of the constitution, should have the highest priority in the national debate now, but rather the debate should be on how to get over a million Canadians back to work in good jobs, and get rid of the AIB with the proper decontrol mechanism. However, what may be needed by the time Mr. Lévesque holds his referendum is some means to permit constitutional options, rather than extremes of separatism or the existing form of federalism.

● (2150)

On the nation's economic input toward the intensification of the Quebec separatist movement, the present government must be held responsible for the some 10 per cent unemployment that exists in that province. Probably at least 40 per cent of the

[Mr. Hogan.]

young people in Quebec between the ages of 16 to 22 are suffering the effects of unemployment generated in large part by the failure of the present government's economic policy. This government has certainly managed to mismanage our national economy, and we in the Atlantic region and our fellow citizens in Quebec share the legacy of those policy failures as shown by our extraordinarily high unemployment. Little wonder that a tenured, separatist, professional elite at the University of Montreal and other Quebec universities, as well as teachers at the high school level, find willing ears amongst young Quebec students as they advocate their separatist ideas.

It seemed to be a most chastened and humble Prime Minister talking to us on national unity today in the House rather than the arrogant man who was telling us, as recently as last year, that separatism was dead in his native province of Quebec. As our leader, the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent), said earlier today, we in the New Democratic Party offer Canadians a positive option. This means a federal government committed to national programs aimed at cultural and economic equality, and political and economic independence for Canada.

The New Democratic Party underlines its determination to defend and promote the position of our official languages and the multiplicity of our cultures.

The NDP urges all Canadians to share this vision of a fairer, independent Canada, and to join with us in establishing the national policy priorities needed to overcome this present crisis.

Therefore, on this national unity question, our party has resolved: First, that while the NDP believes the people of Quebec have the right to make their choice without coercion, we strongly support a federal Canada and are confident that the majority of Quebecers will decide to remain within Canada.

Second, the NDP recognizes that some constitutional reforms are necessary but affirms that it is not by constitutional amendment alone that we will solve the national unity problem. We believe it essential for the federal parliament to maintain sufficient power for effective national economic policies to build a fairer, freer Canada. As one from the Atlantic region, I believe very strongly in this concept of our party.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but the hon. member for Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton (Mr. Dick) is seeking the floor on a point of order.

Mr. Dick: Mr. Speaker, I regret to have to rise on a point of order but I think this is a very important debate in which we are all participating, a debate which every member of the House should be able to throw his heart into and speak from his gut. According to Beauchesne's Fourth Edition, Citation 144, it is the rule of both Houses of Parliament that a member must address the House orally and not read from a written, previously prepared speech, because if the practice of reading speeches should prevail, members might read speeches that were written by others and take up the time of the House.