

National Unity

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacFarlane: I do not intend to reflect on what anyone before me has said, so perhaps hon. members opposite should listen. When I go back to my riding—and I am sure this happens to other hon. members—I am always asked, “What can we do?” People do not say that the situation is lost; they ask what they can do and how they can help. I thought this national unity debate would be one in which hon. members would contribute what they had to offer, and I am willing to admit that there are many better minds than mine. However, in my small way I will contribute what I can to this debate on the unity of our country.

I may be old-fashioned, but the way I face a situation like this is to research it, identify the problem and state the simple solutions which come to my mind. The research is easy for me, because I lived it. I do not have to go to books. I lived on Fifth Avenue. I remember that there were the Stirlings, the MacFarlanes, the Edwards, the Hughes, the Cousineaus and the Heberts. The Cousineaus had 27 children, and the Heberts 17. When we applied for summer jobs, I got a job in a factory, the Stirlings got jobs at the university, and Guy Cousineau became the deliverer of beer for Beausoleil and Markey.

People said the Cousineaus and Heberts had too many children and that their churches were too big. Notre Dame de Sept Douleurs was their church, but the president of the Bank of Montreal attended a little Presbyterian church. It was always that way. Is it not interesting that by 1947 in one of the largest department stores in the second largest French-speaking city in the world a French Canadian made it as manager of men's hats? That was in 1947. The French Canadian girls who worked there spoke English to the French customers. Nobody got a holiday on St. Jean Baptiste day, either. That was the situation we lived in. It is interesting to see what happened to those families which grew up on that little street, Mr. Speaker. The Stirlings became principals of schools and honours graduates in physics, an Edwards became vice-president of Northern Electric, but the Cousineaus never got out of grade four.

● (1710)

When we left McGill University we went to jobs with the Protestant school board at \$1,900 a year. We thought that was terrible, but the French school board was paying only \$700 a year. The money that put us through McGill came from men like Duplessis who were supposed to be hated. We had gymnasiums in our schools, and \$4,000 rugs so that girls could learn to clean them in the home economics course. Those teachers who were earning \$700 a year did not even have a gymnasium or any athletic facilities. We were the most favoured minority in all of Canada. In Montreal, the second largest French-speaking city in the world, English-speaking people were the most favoured in all of Canada. We were in charge: we acted as if we were, and we lived as if we were. It is René Lévesque who wants to take away the favour which that minority has enjoyed, not this federal parliament. I do not know of any member of this House who does not want to protect that minority. We will see that is done. We must guarantee that kind of minority right to others, however, in other areas.

[Mr. MacFarlane.]

My research turned up something else. Some people ask what we are to do with the Péquistes and their ideas. I will be blunt about it, Mr. Speaker. No one in this parliament, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), opposition leaders or any member, wants to divide this country. Just one person does, and the group that surrounds him: it is René Lévesque and the Parti Québécois who speak of separation. When they speak of separation we had better listen carefully, Mr. Speaker. In 1972, when Yves Morin wrote that supposed constitution, he said they should take over certain contiguous areas in New Brunswick and Ontario where there might be a majority French population. Think of that, Mr. Speaker. This is the party that wants to talk of some kind of union. Separation is not negotiable. I am not embarrassed to say that; I am not afraid to say it.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacFarlane: They cannot come to my table to eat, they cannot come to my table to drink, if they want to come as separatists. They come as we have to come—with what we have, all our failings, all our faults, all our mistakes, to work together to bring about what has been building in the country. When I coached football in Verdun they said, “Those French guys cannot play football. Don't let them on your team. What is that big stupid guy from Saint-Hyacinthe doing there?” It was Gilles Archambault, and he was not so stupid. He made it because in that little community of Verdun we recognized our own faults. We went to Ivan Livingston's home, and sitting at dinner suddenly knew what it was like to sit with ten little negro piccaninnies around, realizing you were the only white person and thinking how strange they might feel. This is the thing French Canadians have had to face.

Somebody now wants English Canadians to face that in Montreal. Not this parliament, not these people, but people who in order to achieve their aims would deal with the minority and make it less. There are no members from Quebec on this side of the House who feel that way, and there are no members on the other side of the House who feel that way. If anybody wants to sit down—and I will not—and try to deal with the separatist option, they can answer the questions that I will not answer. Who wants to answer what we are going to do about Ungava? Are we going to take it back if Quebec is not part of Canada? And what about Labrador? Are we going to make a decision for Newfoundland?

Mr. McGrath: That decision was made.

Mr. MacFarlane: If you enter into a separatist negotiation, you had better look at something else. If they come to the table as Canadians, you are right. What will we do with our great economic union? Are we going to discuss common banking, common trade? Quebec will say they need more money because they have lots of unemployment, and we will say that because of inflation we cannot give them more money. How do we negotiate? Somebody else can do it, because it is not going to be in my bivouac. We are not going to go that route. We are going to recognize the tactic of René Lévesque,