

The Address—Mr. Broadbent

semi-autonomous economic regions, as seems to me to be the essence of what those people who are mindlessly calling for five economic blocs mean, the more you set the framework for tension in the country. That, too, is no solution.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: The solution at the federal and constitutional level, in my view, is really very basic. There is almost no move which we can make in terms of devolving federal powers to the provinces, and we should stop the talk that somehow we will remake Canada by remaking the constitution. That is just nonsense. The federal government needs that economic power, particularly, I repeat, in the modern world where competition with other nations is becoming tougher, not easier, and we need national direction.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: The devolution of power is not the answer; the devolution of administration is. I do not want to exaggerate the point—I have made it before. We can move forward considerably in our country by having national programs, whether in housing, medicare or hospitalization, and having the federal government raise the funds but turn them over to the provinces to administer. I see no problem in that. Let them set their own priorities, whether it is with regard to acute care hospitals or nursing homes. Let each province decide that, but let us maintain the national programs which are essential in getting a certain, high, common standard in Canadian nationhood from Prince Edward Island in the east to Victoria, British Columbia, in the west.

So we want no further decentralization in power, but some in administration. Above all, what I am saying—and this is central to my argument—is that in economic affairs we need economic leadership, a sense of national direction, a sense of national purpose emanating from here, emanating from the benches on the other side of the House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, in the context of making the economic argument, I want to say something about the cultural reality as well because it is important in a country, whether it is our country or any other. There are two broad ways of looking at society. There is the way of the people who produce their goods and services, our farmers, our fishermen, our steelworkers and our autoworkers, that is, the economic aspect of life, and there is another aspect. You cannot radically separate it from the economic aspect, but you can do so analytically. I am referring to our cultural life.

I think that in Canada there are two vital cultures in existence. There are many subcultures, but there are two vital ones—the English and the French cultures. I want to say something this afternoon first about the English language culture because I am of the generation that does not turn to the United States, to England or to continental Europe for what I respond to in terms of the English language creativity. I do not have to read Saul Bellow. I like Saul Bellow, but I can

[Mr. Broadbent.]

turn to people such as Atwood, Mordecai Richler, Graeme Gibson for fiction and poetry. We are at a higher level of creativity now than in any other period in our history and at world standard levels.

I am speaking of my culture now, the one from which I come, the English language culture. In terms of music, an English Canadian can be proud. He can listen to Maureen Forrester or Glen Gould, musicians of world renown, and he can listen to Oskar Morawetz in terms of creative composition. The point I am making is that there have been a lot of positive things said about Francophone culture, and I agree with them, but in the last decade and a half there has been a sense of pride and accomplishment, in English Canada, in English Canadian creativity which is second to none in the English-speaking world, and I am proud of that.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: Perhaps on a personal note—I do not make personal observations too often—I think there is something different about the mental framework, and I hesitate to make this point as well, but those under 45 or 40 years of age, as opposed to other Canadians perhaps—this I do not know—had, as I did when I was a student in the early 1960s, the opportunity to study abroad. I was in England and I had the choice to make whether to stay in England and study for an English Ph.D. or come back to my own country. There was no conflict for me; I saw no lowering of standards if I came back to Canada.

So I decided I would study where there was the best person in the world in my field, and the best person in my field happened to be at the University of Toronto, a man named Macpherson. So I studied in Toronto and did my Ph.D. there. The point I want to make is that there is a change going on in our land, in our generation. We no longer feel we have to go to Harvard or to LSE or to Oxford to get our degrees. In fact, we are now exporting our scholars. As the Prime Minister well knows, the fellow who is heading the political science department at Oxford now is a man named Charles Taylor, a very distinguished Canadian.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: The point I am making is that there is great vitality in our land, there is a high level of creativity in the English Canadian culture, in the English language. In the cultural domain something exciting is going on in the province of Quebec. If great things are happening in English Canada, they are also happening in Quebec. We have heard a lot about that recently, but we have not always responded well. They do have their writers, they do have their poets, they do particularly have their song writers and their singers. There is a joie de vivre in that province that should make all of us proud as Canadians.

What I am asking is, what can we do, as the federal government, in the cultural domain in this national unity debate in which we are involved? I can state quite bluntly that there is little that I see we can do in terms of legislation. Most