

The Address—Mr. J. R. Gauthier

Now come, I have got some of you under the harrow. Think twice before it goes over you.

Then, he continues:

I will be a friend to you, in spite of you. So now you know what you've got to expect.

The other David, speaking to his Uriah Heep, said:

I have shown you often enough that I despise you. Why should I dread your doing your worst to all about you? What else do you ever do?

A couple of days ago the hon. member for York South suggested we wait and give this government yet another chance to bring forward legislation before voting it out. My reply is: Why wait for spring, do it now.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa East): Mr. Speaker, I should like first to congratulate you and your colleagues for your appointment to these high posts. I am proud to see that the role of Speaker belongs to a dedicated Franco-Ontarian who is doing honour to his province and to his country.

I should like also, Mr. Speaker, to congratulate and to thank the mover (Mr. Blais), and the seconder (Mr. Blaker) of the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. It is a pleasure for me to see that like myself they are members of a minority in their respective province.

Also, Mr. Speaker, may I express my gratefulness to the Ottawa East electors who kindly elected me as their representative. I accept the honour and I shall endeavour to carry on my duties with all the dignity of that post and with all the ability I have.

During 27 years, from 1945 to 1972, Ottawa East was represented by Mr. Jean Thomas Richard. He was a man of action, a man of the people, and his voters and his country are obliged to him for 27 years of devoted service.

He acquired in those years as a servant of the Canadian people and his riding an enviable reputation as a lawyer and as a member of Parliament. He managed to prove that he was a serious man, a man who could listen to and serve the people of Canada. The people of his riding came to visit him in his office, in the House of Commons, and he always had time to see and help them.

During his long career in Parliament, Mr. Richard served as chairman of the Canadian section of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in 1965 and as chairman of the public service parliamentary committee in 1966-1967. A former whip of Ontario Liberals, Mr. Jean Thomas Richard also had the honor of acting as Deputy Speaker, in 1971. My predecessor served his country and the constituency he represented in Parliament and I should like, on behalf of the electors of Ottawa East, to extend to him our sincere thanks and to wish him long life and happiness.

Franco-Ontarian by birth, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a few remarks about the importance, for all of us, of bilingualism and above all of the ever growing recognition, in the English-speaking provinces, of the French fact which represents over one million Canadians living outside Quebec.

I want to be the spokesman for a people who unhappily have been too often in limbo, namely the Franco-Ontari-

[Mr. McKinnon.]

ans. They do exist and I belong to that group of people who are competent and who want and can render great services to their country if they are given the opportunity of doing so. They proved that they were perseverant and steadfast, while respecting the rights of others. They fought for their country, they overcame a law which prevented them from studying in their own language. They lived with the fact that until very recently they were refused education in their own language, financed by public funds. They fought with persistence and today, anxious for better understanding, they continue to fight for the implementation of a legislation which is supposed to do them justice.

Even if this falls under provincial jurisdiction, the present government as well as the previous one, under the late Lester B. Pearson, recognized more than others that it was necessary to do justice to minorities through legislation, in the fields under federal jurisdiction, where necessary.

This Franco-Ontarian nation of which I am part was severely put to the test but survived and its future is very promising. What is more surprising is that this nation in spite of its problems of survival, the battles it had to fight, still has to fight and win without revolution and hatred. It is through persuasion and perseverance and by recognizing the rights of the majority that it succeeds in convincing more and more the members of the majority of the rightness of its claims and thereby improving its position without however infringing upon the rights of others.

It is only by giving justice to the minorities and through understanding of that fact by the majorities that this country will survive. In spite of the immense progress made in that field, Mr. Speaker, it happens too often that the authorities and even this government, no matter how sympathetic and understanding it may be, act as if "francophone" and "Quebecer" were synonyms. People are unaware of the fact that there are francophones outside of the province of Quebec and if we want a fair representation of francophones in important positions we will have to look outside of the province of Quebec to get them.

I would like this government to recognize in a practical way that francophones outside the province of Quebec constitute a nation with which dialogue is necessary, or the only thing that will be left will still be a silent minority. Francophones exist independently from their brothers of the province of Quebec but they are as francophone as they are and because of their qualities it is their intention to demand to be recognized as such in the allocation of positions and duties in the service of their country.

I repeat, no other government has been as appreciative of the development of French-speaking minorities outside the province of Quebec. As a matter of fact, it was the right hon. L. B. Pearson's government that gave us the report of the B & B Commission. This royal commission prompted noticeable changes in provinces that have met the hopes of the French-speaking minorities in matters of education. Well informed Canadians will never forget the important role played by the federal government in giving its support to the education of minorities. In provinces where people are still struggling for the recognition of minorities' rights in education in their own language,