

*The Budget—Mr. Balcer*

would ensure for our country as brilliant a future as we seemed to have a few years ago.

I should like to suggest to my English speaking friends to imitate the example of Belgium and Switzerland and, in that connection, I call the attention of the house to a book written by a great journalist and a prominent member of the press gallery, Mrs. Ann Francis. That work, which was published by the Canadian institute of international affairs, is entitled: "Language—Bridge or Barrier".

Mrs. Francis wrote that booklet following a trip to Switzerland and Belgium. She described the situation existing in both countries and I believe the government could find there excellent solutions which could be applied to today's problems.

Let us remember that we have the example of Belgium where centralization has caused the dispute between Flemish and Walloon; so much so that today the country is divided and bloody riots break out at regular intervals. On the other hand, we have the example of Switzerland where minorities are treated intelligently and where the majority has established an atmosphere of peace, prosperity and mutual confidence, which has allowed Switzerland to develop and become a country respected everywhere in the world.

Let me quote the words of the minister of external affairs of Switzerland when asked by Mrs. Francis about his secret to remedy the situation and give satisfaction to the minorities, the minister had this answer:

"We have had our troubles. It took us many years to find the answer. Quite simply it is this. We spoil them".

Dr. Hans Zbinden, a leading sociologist at the University of Berne, said to Mrs. Francis:

[Text]

"We must not only respect minorities. We must make them feel we love them for their diversity".

[Translation]

Mrs. Francis added the following:

[Text]

These are not merely beautiful theories to impress a stranger. According to Dr. Hermann Weilenmann, a foremost Swiss historian:

"Although fewer than 30 per cent of the population speak romance languages, they are represented in the federal cabinet by three out of seven councillors. In the same way, there is a tendency to give linguistic, regional and often religious, minorities proportionally more voice on commissions and in the departments of the federal government and the cantons than their numbers would warrant. Likewise minorities are often given more subsidies than the majority to make them take a greater interest in communal affairs".

These might seem to be quite strong arguments in favour of greater advantages for minorities in Canada.

[Mr. Balcer.]

[Translation]

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that they must be quite serious after all, especially when they face such a situation over there, and that we should find among these various suggestions a formula that could be applied to Canada and which would solve our linguistic problems.

This afternoon, the Prime Minister expressed his deep concern over the situation facing us. His voice was not as depressed as when he made his statement on the results of the last federal-provincial conference, but I think that we understand his concern and we are in sympathy with him.

His government is on the verge of getting blamed, in Quebec, for double taxation which will no doubt result from the way Quebec was treated at that federal-provincial conference. His government is once again forced to withdraw its pension plan because it was obviously ill-prepared and it was too anxious, for some unknown reason, to impose its point of view on the provinces.

As far as the Conservative party is concerned, we are in favour of a national pension fund, but we want a plan which will respect the rights of the provinces in that field and will enable all Canadians to enjoy a well-deserved, comfortable and dignified retirement.

Mr. Speaker, we are at the crossroads in Canada, and I am of the opinion that all hon. members should make every effort to bring about the best understanding possible between all groups in the country. As for us, Conservatives, we have a long tradition of fostering mutual respect between Canadians and we wish to assure the house that we will fully support any measure designed to strengthen the bonds which unite the two great founding races of our country.

I wish to remind you that we must give evidence of tolerance and mutual respect because we are responsible for the future of a great country. I am convinced that we will not elude this challenge and that every one of us will do his duty. On the other hand, I hope the government will pull itself together, be better prepared and introduce a truly serious policy, carefully thought-out pieces of legislation that the house could really support unanimously.

[Text]

**Mr. A. B. Patterson (Fraser Valley):** Mr. Speaker, I realize that this is rather a late hour to be participating in a debate such as this, but nevertheless I appreciate the opportunity of making a few observations with respect to the issues before us. We have dealt down through the course of this debate with a great variety of subjects. There are those