

Notwithstanding the creative power of gold, however, honourable gentlemen, we must not stop at the thought that the greatness and the progress of a race, a people, or nation are based solely upon material prosperity. There is another aim, which I consider still more necessary for the welfare of our country: it is the cultivation of a common mentality, the adoption of a truly national credo, and, in matters of special concern, the development and expansion of essentially Canadian thought. This ideal towards which we should always strive, as Canadians fully conscious of our civic responsibility, is founded upon a spirit of understanding and mutual confidence, respect for minority rights, and friendly feelings towards each other on the part of the different groups composing our vast country and the different elements inhabiting it.

We have been placed by Providence on this North American continent to live and prosper side by side. Two great races predominate, one of Gallic origin, the other of Anglo-Saxon descent. The former is here by right of discovery, the other by right of conquest. To the one belongs the glory of having been the pioneer and evangelizing race, to the other the credit of having organized, developed and brought to successful completion many great undertakings. The two represent the finest in modern civilization, and the duality of language, art and literature is and will remain one of the most precious advantages of this Canadian land.

"Catiline is at the gates of Rome and we are deliberating"! exclaimed on a memorable occasion an ancient legislator. Thanks to the friendly relations we have maintained with the outside world for many decades, honourable gentlemen, our country is free from invasion, and no horde of barbarians threatens our institutions, though our frontiers extend unfortified for more than three thousand miles. But other enemies endanger our future as a nation, and these are within our gates: they are the base exploiters who systematically endeavour to keep race prejudice, religious bitterness or local susceptibilities aroused, and who take an infernal delight in stirring up such subversive feelings, which undermine the very foundations of our Canadian community. A truce to all these unpatriotic, anti-Christian, anti-social tactics! Would it not be folly on our part, honourable gentlemen, to waste our time in petty, childish squabbles amongst ourselves when Providence calls us and urges us on to a destiny more and more glorious? Let us all then generously agree to live in perfect harmony and to maintain the most scrupulous respect for the constitution which governs us.

Let the nine Canadian provinces, industrious and prosperous in their respective spheres, study their problems in the light of a national spirit and deal with them in the same way. Under these conditions Canadian Confederation, the Diamond Jubilee of which we have been celebrating with such splendor in the year 1927, will continue to be the brightest jewel in the British Crown; Canada will be the most important centre of that glorious commonwealth of free nations comprising a vast Empire whose dominions extend to the ends of the earth, and on which the sun never sets!

Allow me, honourable gentlemen, before closing, to make a respectful personal allusion to those distinguished members of this Chamber who in recent months have passed away, and particularly to the kindly personality of him whom I have the honour to succeed, Hon. Senator McCoig. Honest and irreproachable citizen, friend of the farmer, steadfast defender of the rights of the people, "Archie"—he would not allow of being called otherwise, even after his political chiefs had recognized his value and merit in having him elevated to the Senate—will long continue to live in the memory of those to whom he was ever a wise counsellor and unfailingly loyal and devoted friend. May the administration of our public affairs be entrusted always to representatives as able, as sincere, as broadminded and as unselfish!

Honourable gentlemen, I claim also, as the Benjamin of this House, the privilege of offering to the grand old man who is its dean, the honourable Senator from St. Hyacinthe, the tribute of my respect and sincere admiration. To succeeding generations he is a magnificent living example not only of physical vigor, but also and especially of civic integrity.

Before resuming my seat, honourable gentlemen, I desire to express publicly my thanks to the Government of my country for the courageous gesture it has made in recognizing the claim of the French group in Ontario to a fairer representation in official and administrative circles. I am quite embarrassed that its choice should have fallen upon my young and humble self. I appreciate what new responsibilities this great honour involves. I come to this Chamber with all the fire and enthusiasm of youth. In contact with your wisdom and experience, honourable colleagues, I hope shortly to reach a "good average" as a legislator, and to be able to give sufficiently intelligent and sensible consideration to the questions laid before this Chamber for final settlement, especially as I shall have been trained in a good school.