

living and proudly represent us abroad since the NFB has won world recognition.

Mr. Speaker, if Maurice Duplessis gave Quebec a flag, the federal government, through its organizations, supplied it with a tripod mast from which to fly it. Mr. Speaker, with regard to centralization those who would oppose our Canadian federal system accuse the Parliament in Ottawa of being a big centralizing and self-complacent brute. There again, Mr. Speaker, the opponents of our political system manipulate history to the extent where, listening to them, one would think Jacques Cartier came to America to achieve the independence of Quebec, while, two centuries later, Louis-Joseph Papineau advocated a type of sovereignty-association with the United States. No, Mr. Speaker, we cannot accept such shortcuts.

The PQ makes a big to-do over the costs of two levels of government: overlapping jurisdictions, excessive competition, duplication of services. It is true that there is a price to be paid for such dispersal of authority, but that is also the price of greater freedom and better protection and defence of our rights. Thanks of the division of legislative powers, and a judiciary that stands above the intervention of a unitary state, Canadians have been able to build a society founded on individual freedoms. Under the Canadian federal regime, no level of government has enough powers to give in to the temptation of totalitarianism. Decentralization of administrative, legislative and judicial powers is the best guarantee against the erosion of fundamental freedoms.

In fact, since the confederation of 1867, the Canadian government has allowed Quebec to develop and become sovereign in many fields. Is it not that same government which, year after year, in the face of the ever-growing economic dynamism of Canada, has opened a host of various jurisdictions to the provinces and transferred several tax powers to them? The truth is that, 30 years ago, the federal government collected two-thirds of all taxes levied by all governments, and the others, one third. Today, after 30 years, the opposite is true. The provincial governments collect two-thirds of taxes paid while the federal government receives only 30.8 per cent. But nobody talks about that and the federal government is still accused of working towards centralization. Decentralization did not occur only in the fiscal field, but it was also apparent in many other arrangements like pensions.

In 1963, by virtue of an agreement with the Canadian government, Quebec was allowed to implement its own pension scheme while the other nine provinces decided to stick with the Canada Pension Plan. In 1974, another agreement was made with the province of Quebec in the field of family allowances. In 1975, another one in the field of immigration. To put it another way, the federal regime in Canada is one of the most decentralized in the world. It bears comparison with Australia, for instance, where 77 per cent of taxes go to the federal government while 22 per cent go to other governments at the regional and municipal levels. In the United States, 55.8 per cent go to the federal government and 44.2 per cent go to the

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state and municipal governments. Therefore, we can see that in Canada, with two-thirds of taxes going to provincial and municipal administrations the centralization thesis is unfounded.

I think that the concept of the status quo, of the lack of evolution of the constitution and of the absence of amendments has been exploited by the advocates of sovereignty. I am referring, Mr. Speaker, to the statement made by the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) in Quebec on January 28. He stated then that there is only one premise in the present constitution, namely respect for the rights of men and women, respect for human rights, respect for the collective aspects of these rights. I am thinking, said the Prime Minister, about language and the rights of regions to exist. From this premise, it is possible to start from scratch if we want to amend the constitution. But since—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but I must inform him that his allotted time has expired. However, he can continue with the unanimous consent of the House.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Roy: I thank you, Mr. Speaker, as well as all my colleagues. I will conclude by saying that sovereignty-association is the option of all those who do not want to choose, those who want to be dependent and independent, sovereign and associate. It is the option of those who want both to undermine Canadian federalism and to keep all the advantages of currency, postal services and defence.

I will vote No to that option, Mr. Speaker, for the referendum brings us at the crossroads. We have to make a choice between a renewed federalism and the separation of Quebec. A renewed federalism remains the preferred constitutional option for the very large majority of Quebecers, and the PQ project represents the sole obstacle to the realization of desirable changes. My dear friends, I will vote No on the referendum because I want to remain a red-blooded Lavallois, an optimistic Quebecer and a realistic Canadian.

● (1620)

[*English*]

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, you are to be congratulated on your appointment as Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole House, and would you convey on my behalf and on behalf of hon. members of this side of the House congratulations to Madam Speaker on her election as Speaker of this House. I think that was an excellent choice and it bodes well for the Thirty-second Parliament.

When I spoke on October 15 last in reply to the last Speech from the Throne, I outlined three basic principles on which I as a member of Parliament stand.

First, in my view there is only one kind of Canadian. There is no distinction between those who speak French as their principal language and those who speak English as their principal language. There is no distinction by reason of cultur-