

Government Orders

because they could not ensure their own development in the Province of Quebec and because Canada, Western Canada was closed to them.

And while French Canadians were leaving for the United States at the rate of 10,000 per year, there was a "Canadian"—as my former professor Michel Brunet used to say, using the English spelling of the word—immigration policy allowing immigrants from the British Isles and Europe to settle in Western Canada for a nominal sum. According to figures that appeared in *Le Devoir* in 1928, the cost of moving to western Canada was \$968 for a French Canadian family with ten children but only \$48 for a British immigrant.

If one wants to prepare for the future, one must look at the past. For Quebec, the past involved a search in difficult conditions by French Canadians either in the other provinces or in Quebec. There was an almost desperate search for our legitimate place as French Canadians and later, in the 1960s, as Quebecers, because we clearly developed an identity as Quebecers.

• (1215)

We have maintained that this quest, which for some is still ongoing, could be realized in a small way through the amendment put forward by my colleague. Again, whatever happened in the past, we must live side by side. If it is still possible to convince my colleagues and the Canadian people that there is a Quebec people who want an equal partnership, there must be signs not only from this side but also from the other side.

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on what the member for Mercier said, a member whom I regard as a separatist while she claims to be a sovereignist. This separatist member of Parliament spoke of the people of Quebec with great pride, and I appreciate her pride in Quebecers, because I too am proud of them.

I must say right away that I am myself a fourth generation Franco-Ontarian. To the separatist member who just spoke, I say, Madam, that that did not prevent me from—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I must remind the House that all remarks must be put through the Chair and not directly to another member.

Mr. Bellemare: Thank you for calling me to order on this very important matter. Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Mercier is very proud to show her allegiance, her patriotism. But I think that her patriotism is slightly out of place. She seems to forget that she belongs to the larger Canadian nation, that it is because of Canadian unity that the provinces and territories were able to develop and the two official languages of Canada were able to develop, not because there were people muttering in one region or another of the country, only looking inwards and only concentrating on petty local concerns.

Francophones outside Quebec have done well and been successful. I think I am a case in point. I did well financially, at school, in the elections, in politics. Never, ever, have Canadians outside Quebec, or inside Quebec for that matter, hindered my success. In fact, it is this national attitude that made me to want to succeed, to want to remain a part of this country.

The member for Mercier kept referring to Canadians who left the country and settled in the U.S. I must point out to her that most of those who did that were from Quebec. It is interesting to note that the member for Mercier uses the term Canadians when talking about negative things and Quebecers for positive ones; only Quebecers can do good.

I must say right away that everyone in Canada does good. If we are to become even stronger as a nation in the future, become a wealthier nation and achieve a level of education envied the world over, it will be through Canadian unity, not through this desire to separate and this constant infighting.

Mrs. Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the hon. member that our future would be much brighter and our prosperity much more certain if the rest of Canada stopped refusing to recognize what Quebec demanded as a people, because these repeated refusals have led to crises which are an expression of the will of that people and nation.

• (1220)

You cannot silence a whole nation. The issue will always resurface because the right of nations is a fundamental one. Democracy is based on that right. Canada's prosperity would indeed be much greater. It could have been much greater if Quebecers had been recognized as a people and a nation, instead of denying that reality. This is true today and it will still be true tomorrow, for the only uncertainty which exists is linked to the possibility that you may reject our decision as a people. This is the only uncertainty; there are no other ones.

Sure, we can talk about prosperity and about the future, but do recognize that we are a people and a nation, and that the decision will be ours. In any case, you cannot overlook that basic reality.

[English]

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether it is simply Monday morning or whether it is my tolerance and my patience wearing thin as day after day in the House we listen to this little band of separatists as they stand in the House to talk about destroying the country.

There is nothing more divisive or nothing more destructive to the country today than to listen to this group stand every day to say that it wants to be a separate nation within Canada. The strength of the country is in the participation of all provinces and all peoples, not the separation this band talks about.