

*The Budget—Mr. Bourque*

maintaining and developing Canadian unity; to the encouragement of increasing co-operation and understanding between the provinces. We are building here a great new nation. To succeed we must be prepared at times to sacrifice some of those things which may seem important to us as individuals, but which play no part in drawing together our various racial and religious groups and helping them to work and live together in harmony.

As a French Canadian and a Catholic I have addressed many audiences in many parts of Canada, and have spoken steadily and consistently in support of national unity. I have frequently pointed to the dangers that lie in the continuance of ancient prejudices, and have urged all those who believe in the future of Canada to speak up for understanding and friendship between all our people and between all our regions.

It has been said many times since world war II that Canada stands in the same position as the United States occupied in the concluding decades of the nineteenth century. We might also look to an even earlier period and find an example of the problem that seems to be facing Canada today. Abraham Lincoln, one of the greatest presidents in the history of the United States, was dedicated to the preservation of the union. Opposed to him were the forces of one section of the country which flaunted its pride in its past and took up arms in order to break the union which had been achieved less than a century before. In his first inaugural address President Lincoln spoke for the union in these words:

Before entering upon so grave a matter as the destruction of our national fabric with all its benefits, its memories, and its hopes, would it not be wise to ascertain precisely why we do it. Will you hazard so desperate a step while there is any possibility that any portion of the ills you fly from have no real existence? Will you, when the certain ills you fly to are greater than all the real ones you fly from—will you risk the commission of so fearful a mistake? All profess to be content in the union if all constitutional rights can be maintained. Is it true, then, that any right, plainly written in the constitution, has been denied? I think not. Happily the human mind is so constituted that no party can reach to the audacity of doing this. Think, if you can, of a single instance in which a plainly written provision of the constitution has ever been denied. If by the mere force of numbers a majority should deprive a minority of any clearly written constitutional right, it might, in a moral point of view, justify revolution—certainly would, if such a right were a vital one. But such is not our case. All the vital rights of minorities and of individuals are so plainly assured to them by affirmations and negations, guarantees and prohibitions, in the constitution, that controversies never arise concerning them. But no organic law can ever be framed with a provision specifically applicable to every question which may occur in practical administration. No

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foresight can anticipate, nor any document of reasonable length contain, express provisions for all possible questions. Shall fugitives from labour be surrendered by national or by state authority. The constitution does not expressly say . . .

From questions of this class spring all our constitutional controversies, and we divide upon them into majorities and minorities. If the minority will not acquiesce, the majority must, or the government must cease. There is no other alternative; for continuing the government is acquiescence on one side or the other . . .

If a minority in such case will secede rather than acquiesce, they make a precedent which in turn will divide and ruin them; for a minority of their own will secede from them whenever a majority refuses to be controlled by such minority. For instance, why may not any portion of a new confederacy a year or two hence arbitrarily secede again, precisely as portions of the present union now claim to secede from it? All who cherish disunion sentiments are now being educated to the exact temper of doing this. Is there such perfect identity of interests among the states to compose a new union, as to produce harmony only and prevent renewed secession? Plainly, the central idea of secession is the essence of anarchy. A majority held in restraint by constitutional checks and limitations, and always changing with deliberate changes of popular opinions and sentiments, is the only true sovereign of a free people. Whoever rejects it does, of necessity, fly to anarchy or to despotism. Unanimity is impossible; the rule of a minority, as a permanent arrangement, is wholly inadmissible, so that, rejecting the majority principle, anarchy or despotism in some forms is all that is left.

The union survived, thanks to the strength of a president who saw the threat to its existence as the most important fact that existed at the time of his inauguration. Canada, too, must survive, not as a group of individual, independent states or provinces, each adopting and following its own policies regardless of the interests of all the others, but as a federation of provinces concerned of course about their own prosperity and their own rights but dedicated to the development of a single great nation, in the prosperity and development of which all will share.

My own province of Quebec has a long and stirring history in which all of us whose heritage is French take pride. We have no wish to sacrifice our language or our religion; and no responsible person in Canada has ever suggested that we should. Neither do we have any wish to be considered apart from the rest of Canada nor to be looked upon as other than good Canadians. The Minister of Finance, who comes from the province of Quebec and who represents an important constituency in that province, recognized that fact in his budget address. He spoke in support of a principle which surely all of us here in this Canadian parliament must accept, the principle that this federation of Canadian provinces must be preserved and that no individual or group, from whatever misguided notions, shall have the right to destroy it.

World conditions imposed upon the minister the necessity of keeping our defence budget