

National Centennial Act

of revenue accruing from individual income tax, corporation income tax and succession duties.

At that time, this order in council provided that if the lieutenant governor in council of a province asked for return in full of these sources of revenue, the federal government would have had to give them back within 30 days. That condition was stipulated in the order in council of 1942, under which the provinces agreed to lend their sources of revenue to the federal government which, in turn, committed itself to give them back to the provinces within 30 days, on request made by the lieutenant governor in council. So it means that this concerned the rights of provinces.

Mr. Chairman, speeches on that matter have been heard for a long time in this house. I am of the opinion that, at the present time, after all those speeches, people have all the required information and it would be time to take action. Still, it must be a step in the right direction, because if we are not ready to apply the proper remedies to confederation, we will not be able to cure what may be ailing it; we will just make its condition worse and heavens knows that it is bad enough as it is.

What would be the proper cures? They have been mentioned several times and there is a fairly wide consensus of opinion on that point in the province of Quebec today.

First of all, the provinces must regain possession of their sources of income, so that they may develop by themselves and without the assistance of the federal government all the fields which come under their jurisdiction according to the B.N.A. Act.

As the hon. member for Villeneuve (Mr. Caouette) stated, that should be done, and indeed I am glad to say it here in English, so that my English speaking colleagues may better understand.

[Text]

What we as French Canadians want in this country is this. We do not require other people in Canada to speak French in our country. That is not what we call our right under the constitution. What we want is our right to speak French in the country. We do not require that same right for every Canadian citizen. We do not require people in Toronto or Vancouver to speak French, but we would like French Canadians to have the opportunities to speak French, their own language, in their own country. I do not think that is wrong.

As the hon. member for Villeneuve mentioned, when we from the province of Quebec come into Ontario, the first road sign we meet

[Mr. Gregoire.]

when entering the province of Ontario on the road from Montreal to Ottawa says: "Observe speed limit". We do not require that a road sign should be written in both languages. It might be a courtesy, but that is not what we want. We want the opportunity and the facilities to develop ourselves, and to develop by ourselves in our country. We do not require anything from English speaking Canadians. They can develop themselves as they wish, but let us have the same opportunity.

[Translation]

Mr. Chairman, I do not think that this is fanaticism. I do not believe that it is demanding concessions from the other group. No.

There is no concession to ask in this regard. The thing is simply this: the principle of two nations is being recognized more and more in our country, and those two nations must both have the opportunity to develop and to expand, so that the whole country may develop.

To my friends, the new Canadians, who seem to fear this inquiry on biculturalism and who would like it to become an inquiry on multiculturalism, I say that it should not be attempted to make of Canada a country with an English, French, Polish, Italian, German, Ukrainian culture, because we would end up unavoidably with a melting pot as in the United States. Let every Canadian citizen strive to protect two cultures in Canada. Then, the descendants of other ethnic groups who will come to settle in Canada will have the opportunity to keep at least their traditions, their folklore and even their native tongue in certain cases; they may safeguard part of their cultural heritage if two nations can live together in Canada. If on the contrary, we try to preserve many of them, we will end up with a melting pot, as it is the case in the United States.

Mr. Chairman, we will celebrate the confederation centennial if on one hand, we act accordingly; if each ethnic group looks after its own business so as to develop itself and expand and if on the other hand, we act in such a way as to enable both races, both cultures to develop themselves according to their own ambitions, their character, while preserving their language and their culture.

Mr. Berger: Mr. Chairman, would the hon. member for Lapointe permit a very simple question?

Mr. Gregoire: Certainly.

Mr. Berger: I have listened, to a certain extent, with pleasure to the speeches made tonight by the hon. members for Villeneuve and Lapointe. But there is that ever-recurring word "we": "we say", "we want", "we wish"