

taining as much as possible the identity, individuality and freedom of choice of man.

[English]

It is not for me to offer any detailed comment on the extremely varied aspects of the government's legislative program for this session as announced in the Speech from the Throne. This will be done over the next few days by speakers from both sides of the House. However, as far as I am concerned, under the general headings of the Speech from the Throne, which deal with such matters as national unity, equality of opportunity, enhancement of individual rights, and the role of government, I trust it will be possible to have frank, positive, and well planned discussions for the greater good of our society.

May I, however, add a few words on a subject which is very close to my heart? I speak here as a French-speaking Quebecer for whom this matter goes far beyond the narrow confines of mere bilingualism; my reference here is to national identity and to our purposes and aspirations as Canadians.

[Translation]

This is a particularly sensitive issue to raise when you are a Quebecer, French speaking at that, and that you are determined to work in federal politics as a parliamentarian, especially in view of the recent events in the field of bilingual air communications, which clearly show the problems which the French speaking minority must face to assert its rights and fully realize its aspirations within the Canadian federation, especially as we must seriously consider the ultranationalistic feelings which still exist in Quebec and which have some very attractive aspects.

A country is of course a physical and geographical entity, but also and most important, it is made up of people who bring to it their cultures, their traditions and their way of life. What gives a people its soul and its nationalism is something deeper than the simple physical existence of a political entity called Canada, something which is closer to their own culture or cultures of its citizens who develop common ideas and aspirations as residents and as an integral part of their country.

In the past Canada has found it very difficult to find its identity. And even now, we often have a negative reaction, we compare ourselves to the Americans and we are glad or sad, as the case may be, because of what they are and of what we are not.

In fact, we should try instead to define what we really are, but we do not have many points of reference to do so. Of

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course, we had the French colonization, the English conquest, the exploration of Western Canada, Confederation, the railways, the Great War, the World War II, the entry of Newfoundland into Confederation, the Olympics. Of course, there were the American Indians, the French, the English, the Italians, the Ukrainians, the Chinese and all the other ethnic groups, but what is it that makes us distinctively Canadian? What makes our history and our people unique? That is what every Canadian must feel. It is a difficult task which we must undertake.

In 1967, during the Centennial celebrations there was a feeling of Canadianism which faded too quickly and we are still faced with problems of identity, Quebec or British Columbia separatism, bilingualism, transportation, constitution, federal-provincial relations and many others.

In spite of all this, I am sure that for the majority of Canadians, the word Canada has a meaning and it is perhaps when we are abroad that we suddenly understand it through the kindness and interest shown to us.

But why? We must find out and fast because time is running out!

● (1540)

[English]

It is in this spirit, Mr. Speaker, that I wish to thank the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) for having shown his confidence in me, as well as all members present, for their understanding. It is with pleasure, therefore, that I express my support for the motion moved by the hon. member for Restigouche, and commend it to the House for its approval.

On motion of Mr. Clark the debate was adjourned.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Accordingly this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at two o'clock in the afternoon. Might I say in passing that a small reception has been arranged for later on this afternoon, beginning at about half past four in Room 253B, at which, of course, all hon. members and their guests would be most welcome.

On motion of Mr. Trudeau, the House adjourned at 3.47 p.m.