

Dominion-Provincial Conference

the lack of one of the official languages a disadvantage to senior civil servants.

Again, I do not think I need to spend more than a few seconds in reiterating our support of the notion of a charter of human rights and our support of the entrenchment of such a charter in the constitution of Canada. We can see no harm in it, and I can see no logic in most of the articles I have read and the speeches I have heard against it. Many members of my profession, when I am not in parliament, oppose the idea of entrenchment and are tied to the old-fashioned notion of the supremacy of parliament. They contend it must not be interfered with, and I disagree with them. I agree with the Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) and all my colleagues, particularly the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) who has spoken and written about this a great deal, that there are basic human rights which no legislature ought to be able to touch. I agree that such rights should be entrenched in the constitution of our country so that they cannot be abridged either by the federal parliament or a provincial legislature.

● (2:40 p.m.)

I have tried in my remarks, as the first speaker for my colleagues and my party, to deal with some of the basic problems that face us. I repeat what I said, that the problem of the division of power and the use of federal spending power has hardly been touched by the conference. It has, if I remember correctly, not yet been touched by the continuing committee. Therefore, the really vexing conflicts in this country still remain to be confronted, let alone solved. But I have great confidence that we will in the end succeed. We will succeed, particularly, if we set for ourselves some common national goals and objectives, if we become more concerned about what a particular power will be used for and less concerned about who will wield it.

Anyone who knows Canada cannot doubt its potential greatness. I detest nationalism when it is chauvinistic, narrow, bigoted and believes in its superiority over others. But I believe in a nationalism which seeks greatness based on respect of others as well as respect of self. In one sense the nation state is to the world community what the family unit is to the nation. In that sense, I am proud to be a member of this country and a Canadian nationalist who resents control exercised over

[Mr. Lewis.]

our destiny by multi-national corporations abroad.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Lewis: One of the constitutional objectives ought to be to regain control of our economy and our economic destiny in this country. In this sense, also, all of us want to see Canada achieve its full potential of great social and cultural work and play a part in the painful and anxious search for world peace and equality of conditions among all nations. Therefore, it is our belief that we cannot escape the need for a total review and revision of the fundamentals of our constitution. We cannot escape a stronger central government in Canada playing its full role in the attempts to solve the new urban problems which affect the quality of life of most Canadians.

No doubt it will take time, but if we succeed in finding such national objectives as I have indicated, national objectives of value and of meaning to all our people, the time and effort will not only preserve Canada as one federal nation but will strengthen and heighten its human achievements at home and its place in the world. I humbly say, Mr. Speaker, that I know of no task which more justly demands our dedicated attention.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, it is rather difficult, as was mentioned by the previous speaker, to analyze and bring about conclusions on the discussions which took place during the federal-provincial conference.

We should like to make some constructive suggestions but in the few minutes available to us, it is rather difficult to attempt to rectify a situation or a constitution which we all wish to see modified, and to make all the necessary suggestions.

At this time when everyone wants to amend the constitution—this situation has prevailed now for a few years—within the provincial and federal governments, unfortunately bombs are exploding in Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto.

This leads us to ask ourselves whether Canada would not, unfortunately, be late in its desire to amend the constitution and bring about solutions to the problems facing our young people, our provincial governments, our municipalities and our school boards? At the present time, are our public bodies patient enough to wait for solutions to problems which date back many years and which