

## S.O. 29

when we can address our constituents and we know that we are here with their consent and their support, Mr. Speaker, it may be difficult for many of us to imagine what apartheid is like.

● (1910)

## [English]

I have an article written by Frederick van Zyl Slabbert. He is a former Leader of the Progressive Federal Party of South Africa. It is my understanding that the Progressive Federal party of South Africa consisted only of Members of Parliament who were white, because only whites were allowed of course. It advocates and desires equal rights for black people. The former Leader of that party recently resigned because he felt totally frustrated at not being able to gain for the majority of people of that country what they deserve. In an article in *The Gazette* on May 13, 1986, referring to the pass laws, he said:

The South African government recently announced the abolition of the hated pass laws, the network of statutes and regulations that controlled the lives of millions of black South Africans.

Hundreds of thousands were arrested and jailed annually for pass-law offences. These laws broke up families (a man could not take his wife and children with him when he found work in the city) and made technical criminals of ordinary people looking for work.

It is difficult for us to imagine, as we sit in the House and our families join us in Ottawa and occasionally sit in and listen to what we say, that were we South Africans and coloured, not only could we not sit in Parliament, because non-whites are totally denied that franchise, but if we came to this city looking for work we would be denied the right to bring our families with us because we could not get them properly franchised according to that law which has existed for so many years in that country. It is difficult for us to imagine having to live in that kind of situation.

Of course, there are those who will say that there are many other countries in which people are oppressed. That is true, but the difference between rich and poor in South Africa is not a lack of wealth or lack of resources, it is a deliberate act to separate people and to cause the majority of them to be poor so that the minority can have all the wealth for themselves.

Many people have written books and essays on this situation in South Africa. The debate has been going on for a long time.

## [Translation]

I may recall, Mr. Speaker, that in this House, on Friday, March 17, 1961, the Right Hon. John Diefenbaker, then Prime Minister of Canada, was just back from a Commonwealth Conference in which a clear indication had been made to South Africa . . . a conference where sanctions had been taken against South Africa and it was informed that if it did not intend to change and abolish apartheid, the Commonwealth was not longer interested in having that country as a member.

Mr. Diefenbaker said, and I quote:

"The general attitude we took was criticize strongly and deplore the racial policy of the Union Government and the anxiety we felt it was arousing in the hearts and minds of millions of people throughout the world.

We expressed our deep concern about its impact on the relations among the member countries of the commonwealth and on the cohesion of the commonwealth itself as a multiracial association. I took the stand then, and I have taken it before, that the United Nations answers to these principles, and that the commonwealth cannot do less."

Interestingly, Mr. Speaker, today, 25 years later, there has been practically no change with respect to the rights of South African Blacks.

My point is that we must be prepared to take far more stringent measures than has been the case in years gone by, since although the kind of action we have taken in the past may have brought about a very slight improvement, it certainly did not produce the intended results—

## [English]

We in this country have long taken our rights for granted—sometimes too much so, in my opinion. A great Canadian once spoke about those rights and freedoms. He said:

Thank Providence that we live in a country of absolute freedom and liberty. Let us always bear in mind our duties, for duty is always inherent in right. Our fathers had to labour to secure these rights. Now let us fulfil our part. Three years ago, when visiting England at the Queen's Jubilee, I had the privilege of visiting one of those marvels of Gothic architecture which the hand of genius, guided by an unerring faith, had made a harmonious whole, in which granite, marble, oak and other materials were blended. This cathedral is the image of the nation that I hope to see Canada become. As long as I live, as long as I have the power to labour in the service of my country; I shall repel the idea of changing the nature of its different elements.

I want the marble to remain the marble; I want the granite to remain the granite—

Those were the words of Sir Wilfrid Laurier on August 15, 1900. It is my hope that the day will come when black South Africans will be able to read what I have just read and do as we do, look at those rights that Sir Wilfrid Laurier described to us on August 15, 1900 and think of them as being their rights. Unfortunately, that is not the case now.

## [Translation]

To conclude, Mr. Speaker, this well-known South African, himself a white man, wanted, as do all of us, improvements in the privileges and rights of the approximately 20 million Blacks, to come about peacefully, and as much as possible with no adverse effect on the population.

● (1920)

We have to realize, Mr. Speaker, that we have already collectively built all the societies in this world. We have already taken peaceful action by expressing our concerns to the South African Government, but until now, we have met with near complete failure.

Doctor Christian Barnard, the well-known physician and medical innovator, who is himself white, when describing the