

impossible one. Some may call confederation a pact; some may say it is an agreement. I would liken it to marriage, which is intended to be permanent and enduring. At the same time I hold the view that we must be careful not to weaken the authority of the provinces. After all, they have very grave responsibilities. Theirs is the obligation to look after the matters of education and of property and civil rights; it is their duty to administer justice within their respective areas. These are great tasks in any nation. The Fathers of Confederation were wise when they decided upon a federal jurisdiction rather than the centralization of all legislative powers in Ottawa. By no other means could they have resolved the conflicts which then existed and which it was sought, through confederation, to cure. Another reason why complete centralization would not have been wise is that this is a country of vast extent. You cannot govern from Ottawa, in local matters, people who are thousands of miles away, whether in British Columbia, Nova Scotia or Newfoundland. The provinces have distinct responsibilities in a federal system, and I think it would be a great mistake to try in any way to weaken their powers within their own jurisdiction.

I do not share the fears which some have expressed that the proposed legislation will open the way to a weakening of provincial responsibilities. But it is incumbent upon parliament to exercise its powers with great prudence,—for instance, in the matter of declaring works to be for the “general advantage of Canada.” A few years ago, in a measure then before us, grist mills in the provinces of the West were defined as “works for the general advantage of Canada.” If parliament can do that, is it not open to the federal authority to make the same declaration with regard to oil filling stations, and might it not be possible in that way to limit or lessen the authority and power of the provinces in matters over which the constitution gives them exclusive jurisdiction? I mention that point in passing, not because it has any particular relation to the motion before us, but to emphasize my opinion that a heavy responsibility rests upon the federal parliament not to limit by any means, direct or indirect, the powers of the provinces.

It would be most unfortunate were any conflict to arise or intensify between the two authorities. In matters of this kind our public men must be patriots before they are politicians. The public man, whether in federal or provincial life, who approaches these problems otherwise than with a desire to do what is best for our country is unworthy to wear the mantle of the Fathers who, in spite of great difficulties in their day, laid

wisely and well a constitution under which Canada within eighty-two years has marched forward to a place among the leading nations of the world.

I have confidence that our public men will be equal to their responsibilities. If we approach these vital matters—which will profoundly affect the well-being of Canadians yet unborn—in a spirit of partisanship and with a disposition to seek political advantage, whether here or anywhere else, we shall fall far short of what the occasion requires.

And we have reason for pride. Thinking of what Canada was eighty-two years ago and what it is today, I venture the assertion that no country in the world has shown, at any time in its history, comparable progress in a similar period of time. When confederation was achieved, what we now know as Canada was a series of scattered disconnected provinces. It took weeks to get their representatives together to discuss confederation. The population, as I recall it, was somewhere around three millions. Those were the days of the pioneers. What is the picture today? In the intervening eighty-two years we have opened up this vast dominion, increased our population to thirteen and a half millions, and developed our institutions of self-government through the federal, provincial and municipal fields. We have advanced education; we have universities and high schools all over the land. We have libraries and museums of art which, if not as far advanced as they might be, represent a definite beginning. Our material development has progressed to the point where we are the third greatest trading nation in the whole world. Is not this a record to evoke pride in every Canadian who has within him any instinct of patriotism? It is a tremendous achievement!

Looking to the future, I maintain that if we are true to our traditions, and if on vital matters of this kind we put our country's welfare before everything else, this nation will endure. The record of our past proclaims our future. We shall build on this northern half of the North American continent a nation dedicated to freedom and liberty, wherein justice and fairness will reign, and where our progress in these things will be an example and an inspiration to other nations, in a weary and distracted world.

**Some Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Mr. Marcotte:** I move the adjournment of the debate.

**Hon. Mr. Copp:** Honourable senators, before the motion carries, I feel that I should say a word or two. I am sorry that the leader of the opposition (Hon. Mr. Haig) has been obliged to postpone his speech. If the house