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larger population and a larger financial base are more secure than those resting on smaller populations or economic bases.

The Reform approach to a new Canada also recognizes that Quebecers as well as other Canadians want to be treated equally under the law and to be free to preserve their cultural and linguistic heritage. When we ask Canadians they say they want both equality and freedom to preserve cultural diversity.

The problem in the country is not getting support for these objectives. The challenge is to reconcile them and to provide for the attainment of both within a single state. The approach recommended by Reformers is a two-pronged approach. First, in Canada's basic constitutional arrangements we should explicitly recognize the principle of the equality of the provinces and all citizens.

Federalists should be encouraged in this regard that the year end Decima-Maclean's poll taken immediately after the defeat of the Charlottetown accord showed for the first time that an absolute majority of Canadians in every province, including Quebec, support the equal provinces constitutional model over the founding racial groups model.

Second, in Canada's constitutional division of powers and in public policies flowing from that division of powers, we should make the preservation of cultural and linguistic distinctiveness a personal, private and provincial responsibility. The role of the federal government in such matters should be confined to the prevention of discrimination on the basis of cultural or linguistic grounds.

I have only scratched the surface of developing a fresh vigorous vision of a new and better Canada. My colleagues will expand on this vision. We look forward to the contributions of other members. My main purpose is to illustrate the process whereby Canada, the whole great sea to sea to sea federal union, can renew itself. We start by asking the people where they would like to go. We listen carefully. We construct public policies to move the nation in that direction. We offer more than the status quo. If our policies require constitutional changes, we seek those as well but only at the end of the process and not at the beginning.

This is what Reformers have endeavoured to do over the last five years on a limited scale as an extraparliamentary party. Now as a party with strong parliamentary representation and greater resources we are in a position to do more to pursue this vision of a new Canada and to establish a rallying point for those Canadians who wish Canada to remain federally united.

We shall do three more things to advance the cause of federalism in the months ahead. First, we are striking a new Canada task force within our party to further refine and flesh out this vision of a new Canada. This task force will include members of our caucus. It will seek additional input from people in parts of the country where we are not well represented. It will

initiate a major teledemocracy effort on this subject in the early fall.

Second, we are establishing a contingency planning group to prepare a reasoned, principled, federalist response to all those troubling questions and issues which the threat of Quebec secession raises for Canada. A list of the questions which this group will address will be released this week and the terms of reference of this contingency planning group will be established before the end of June.

Third, we will bring together the results of this work, a fuller and more complete vision statement of a new Canada and a reasoned, principled federalist response to the issues raised by separatism for presentation to the country at our national assembly here in Ottawa on October 14 to October 16.

This is what Reformers are doing to fill the national unity vacuum with a positive vision of the future and a reasoned, principled federalist response to the threat of separation. Our question to the government is: What is it going to do more than defending the status quo to fill the national unity vacuum over the next three months?

• (1025)

During the last few days our Prime Minister has been visiting Normandy as we and other nations remember and honour D-Day in Europe. That event still speaks to us and to people around the world. It declares that there are certain ideals and concerns for which men and women are prepared to die. If leaders and legislators can discern and articulate those ideals and concerns for their generation, they can give that generation a vision worth living for and worth striving for.

The wartime leaders of the western democracies in the 20th century, Borden, King, Churchill, Wilson and Roosevelt, all understood this. One of them put this into words to this effect. He said: "Mothers who had lost their sons in France have come to me and have taken my hand and have said 'God bless you'. I advised the course of action which led to the deaths of their sons. Why then, my fellow citizens, should they pray God to bless me? Because they believed", and listen to the words, "for something that vastly transcended any of the immediate or palpable objects of the war".

There are certain things such as freedom, security, equality, heritage, unity, democracy and home which vastly transcend the immediate and palpable objects of public policy and our daily routines. These are the things that people are in the final analysis prepared to die for and should therefore be prepared to live for and to strive for.

The Canadians who landed in Normandy were not fighting for the preservation of the status quo or for a hyphenated Canadianism or for the right to secede. They were fighting for ideals which vastly transcend and yet were rooted in their personal beliefs and hopes.