

in this newspaper report is not the board referred to in the act, and that a board has not been established by order in council pending the decision of Parliament to establish that board?

Hon. Paul Martin: Honourable senators, it is true that Senator Grosart mentioned this matter to me a few moments ago. The answer to the question is found in the speech that Senator Cook made when introducing the bill. He recalled that in November last the Minister for Industry, Trade and Commerce announced the establishment of a Textile and Clothing Board on an interim basis pursuant to section 18 of the Government Organization Act. Therefore, the board set up under that act is not the board contemplated by Clause 3 of this bill.

CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE

THIRD WORKING SESSION HELD AT OTTAWA— DEBATE CONTINUED

The Senate resumed from Thursday, March 11, the adjourned debate on the inquiry of Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West) calling the attention of the Senate to the Statement of Conclusions of the Third Working Session of the Constitutional Conference, held at Ottawa, 8th and 9th February, 1971, and tabled in the Senate on Thursday, 11th February, 1971.

[Translation]

Hon. Paul Desruisseaux: Honourable senators, the Honourable John J. Connolly's speech of March 11 last on the conclusions of the third working session of the Constitutional Conference held at Ottawa on February 8 and 9, 1971, produced a deep impression. I personally realized once more how important Senator Connolly's contributions to Canada and to the Senate have been. This former minister, who was for many years Government Leader in the Senate, possesses a most remarkable legal mind, invaluable experience in constitutional matters and clarity, limpidity of expression, all of which he demonstrated again in that brilliant speech. With less skill, less experience, less directness and unfortunately in a more superficial way, I should like to express some thoughts on certain aspects of the third working session, after taking a bird's-eye view of some of the facts of our history, in order to arrive at a better understanding of their cause-effect influence on our present constitutional endeavours. First of all, I believe the meeting was indeed a most fruitful and constructive one. It was also the occasion of the first breach in that barrier of reticence which has often brought participants in such conferences near despair.

I will briefly mention a few relevant facts of our colourful, albeit turbulent history, which have deeply influenced our political thinking.

In the early days of our country, wars of long duration depleted our energies, arrested our development at its start and ruined our first trade relations with European countries. Furthermore, because of France's decision to give preference to the development of Florida and Brazil, in the hope of finding greater wealth in those regions, we

were left in the hands of French development companies. France, our mother country at the time, had abandoned us, and, consequently, our development was limited while that of the English colonies in America was proceeding rapidly.

Before the conquest, we experienced four inter-colonial wars: 1689-97, 1701-13, 1740-48 and 1754-60, plus the so-called Fox War from 1728 to 1734. Thus ended New France on which our settlers had so legitimately based their hopes.

This was also the beginning of a new nation, with a new name "Canada", made up initially of some defeated people, exhausted, abandoned by the mother country, and even deprived of their properties, and concerning which Voltaire, with cynicism, in the midst of mocking from the French royal court, said that this was but the abandonment of a few acres of snow without any value. They were not even concerned with the 60,000 good French settlers that they were leaving there. They even failed to recognize the paper currency, in the amount of £41,000,000, used for New France by the French government. The economic situation in France, made worse by the ruinous prodigality and the scandalous corruption of the French court of the time, allowed but the redemption of a very small fraction of this issue of money. Thus, France has remained, since that time, indebted and bound toward our people of French origin. It is worth reminding ourselves that those were our ancestors at the time of the conquest.

[English]

And so when the British took over the country most of them were startled. They had not expected what they saw—a proud, though totally ruined nation but with strongminded, determined citizens.

After the conquest the former French "colons" or the colonials, the Canadians, first came under a 17-year military and unilateral government in which they had no say but for which they had to pay. In 1774 the Canadians were given the Quebec Act, a unilateral offering that gave rights along with the assurance of some protection of their language and religion in accordance with the treaty.

Revolution was then thundering south of the border. Rebellion was breaking out in New England. The decision had been reached to install a freer government here with certain basic freedoms. At last we saw the start of a new prosperity that had been quite unknown up to that time in our country.

Unfortunately, it was a government under an imposed unilateral constitution and it displeased the inhabitants of Canada. To us, so government-minded, it felt like the continuation of a form of autocratic rule by a governor who retained dictatorial powers, and members of a legislative council appointed by him. At the time of the war of the English colonies in America against Britain in 1812, as we know, we were invited directly and indirectly to side with the rebellious Americans.

It is interesting to recall here for instance, that the *Gazette*, founded in 1774 in Montreal by Benjamin Franklin and first published in French, had the mission of