

• (1130)

Mr. Mulroney: The ultimate goal is negotiations resulting in an end to apartheid and the creation of a pluralistic non-racial democracy. No one knows better than Canadians these days that constitution-making is complex and requires enormous measures of creativity, tolerance and trust. We wish you well in your own most challenging constitutional endeavours.

The thirst for democracy now being slaked in eastern Europe and Latin American is spreading to other parched areas of the world. Pluralistic democracy is a stepping stone to economic prosperity. You cannot have one without the other. Fundamental rights and freedoms, including free economies, are universal concepts with universal validity irrespective of continent and irrespective of culture. South Africa is no exception.

And so, Sir, we take your presence here today as a signal of the freedom and the democracy that we know will soon grace your majestic land and brighten the future of all of South Africa's children. A free and a democratic South Africa will find in Canada, will find in members of this House of Commons, a true friend and a committed ally whose fundamental goal is the peace and the well being of all of your people irrespective of colour or creed.

Mr. Mandela, it is with special joy that I, as Prime Minister of Canada, now invite you to address the Parliament and the people of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nelson Mandela (Deputy President of the African National Congress): Mr. Speaker, honourable Prime Minister, distinguished leaders of the opposition parties, representatives of the people of Canada, ladies and gentlemen, we would like to thank you most sincerely for granting us the honour and privilege to speak from the podium of the House of Commons of Canada, an eminent example of the democratic perspective toward which our people aspire.

The fact that we have not had the opportunity to do the same thing in our own country, even as guests, emphasizes the inequity of the apartheid system which we are all determined to abolish without delay.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mandela: Like young people everywhere, as we grew up in South Africa, we embarked on an exciting voyage to discover the world. We were driven by a consuming desire to know the truth about people, about

society, about the world of nature and always centred to that search was the need to find out whether there was anything in human nature and society, and whether there was anything in the universal order of things which predetermined the place of a black person and the African in society. Instinctively we embarked on this inquiry because we felt that there was something in our society which was wrong, unjust and unacceptable.

We had, after all, listened to and responded with warm hearts to passionate sermons which proclaimed that God made man in his image. We had observed and were moved by school lessons which spoke of men being created equal. We had searched, as in a trance, as we learned of white men and women who had fought tyranny in order to establish societies based on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity.

Our own life experience and that of all other black people around us and beyond the borders of our country told us that all these precepts and experiences were not meant to refer to or include men and women of colour. Whatever God's purpose might have been, it seemed clear that the white race had decreed that only its members were fit to assume the image of the Creator. Such liberty, equality and fraternity as there were, were but bonds to unite the white people around the common purpose of denying the black majority these privileges.

That youthful inquiry into the essence of social reality was, at the same time, the spark that came to the fire of rebellion in many a heart among our peers. And life, this scorching heat of soldering iron, bonded the rebels together as in a fist of steel. Where an oath was sung, it was simply said that men would rest and none would spare their lives until the people had regained their liberty, equality and fraternity. Many have died in the effort to honour that commitment.

For three and a half centuries, each generation of our people has supplied its due share of matters. An entire people has learned not to mourn the death of heroes and heroines but to steel itself for new battles. An entire people has known what it is to recognize the fact of defeat while rejecting the demand that it should surrender. So it came about that even those who had not even reached puberty knew that they, too, had a place in the ranks of those who challenged the hypocrisy of a degenerate system which claimed the part of western civilization while its very existence was predicated on the repudiation of everything to which attaches the word civilization.