

The Address

very well that education is a provincial jurisdiction and that for Quebec, it is very precious. The Quebec Minister of Education said today that that kind of infringement by the federal government was outrageous and totally unacceptable.

Speaking on that same subject, the leader of the NDP said today that the federal government should play a more important role in education. That means that she supports the plan announced by the Tories in their Speech from the Throne. Does the hon. member support that position and can he explain how Quebecers could accept such an infringement on Quebec jurisdiction?

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, our Constitution gives some powers to the federal government, other powers to the provinces and I agree that education should stay with the provinces. However, in its administration it might be useful to have a national policy with some kind of coordination between provinces in that area.

It might be possible to have, I am thinking about my own province, Saskatchewan—maybe not Quebec, because it's different—and British Columbia or Manitoba, more coordination between the various systems. But, strictly from a constitutional point of view, I think that this power should stay with the provinces.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Resuming debate. The hon. Member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore.

Mr. Patrick Boyer (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to participate in this debate on the Speech from the Throne.

[*English*]

This morning when I was walking to the Parliament Buildings, I passed the post office building at the corner of Elgin Street and Sparks Street. I looked again at the cornerstone on that building. It said 1939 A.D. 1939 was after 10 years of the most cruel and crushing depression ever to have been felt in this country, and was the moment that war clouds were gathering over Europe and we were about to be plunged into the most severe military holocaust of this century.

Yet, at that low moment, in that valley of despair, someone had the courage to build a building that was a part of Canada's future. I see that as a metaphor for

where we are today, that ability to inscribe hope, even to see confidence, in what we build.

What we must build today is not with mortar and concrete, with glass or steel. What faces us now is building new attitudes of confidence, confidence in ourselves as Canadians, and building a cultural renaissance in our country that will give rebirth to a greater Canada.

Over the last two years as Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, I had the chance to see how many other people around this planet view our country. If I had any wish in 1991, it would be that Canadians could see ourselves as others elsewhere in the world see us.

They would find it incomprehensible that we, in this comfortable country, are talking with such despair about our future. Hearing this current debate, they would certainly be blinking in incomprehension.

How about those who are living within the northern or southern borders of Iraq today? What about those in the Bangladesh flood plain, where the current crop of human fatalities is but an ominous portent of what is waiting as the UN today released statistics showing that world population is going to double in the next 60 years?

What about those who live, barely, in Ethiopia or Sudan staring vacantly into the dizzying void of starvation? What about those in the pollution choked countries of eastern Europe? What even of those people struggling to avoid the final collapsing remnants of the communist regimes where the lie could no longer be lived, even by those who spoke it?

Canada imperilled? Canada about to break up, to break down, to break apart? Canada? No one who sees our country from abroad can understand this nonsense. You have to be Canadian to understand the parasitic insecurity and self-doubt which constantly brings us down, to know that the route to political unity actually lies through a new attitude and awareness of ourselves. We are daring to express that in a cultural way and in a vastly more democratic way.

The late Canadian literary scholar Northrop Frye urged that we forsake political tinkering and concentrate more positively and profitably on becoming, for the first time, the cultural federation.