

*The Address—Mr. Rochon*

delude themselves, but they had confidence in themselves. That dream of a united Canada they believed with all their spirit and all their heart. They set to work and shaped a great country out of the future.

As remarkably conceived by the fathers of confederation, that union of the maritime provinces, of Upper and Lower Canada, that confederation system proved to be the most efficient means to make us grow up and to assert ourselves as a nation. I shall not go as far as to say, Mr. Speaker, that everything was perfect, that we in Quebec in particular, did not have any cause for complaint; I shall return to that in a moment, but the fact remains that this century, these hundred years from 1867 to 1967 enabled us, as the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) said in Quebec city on April 24 last during the national conference on centennial, and I quote:

During our first century of Canadianism, we have built up a powerful and prosperous national economy.

A powerful and prosperous economy, Mr. Speaker, so that this dream of the fathers of confederation is no longer a dream but a wonderful reality extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific, making of Canada today one of the pillars of civilization and, for the people of Asia and the Far East, a centre of scientific, moral and material riches which enabled them to survive and often prevented them from dying.

Mr. Chairman, what is one hundred years in the life of civilizations that are thousands of years old? Nothing, or almost nothing. In the life of a young country, like ours, it is a great deal; it is even a whole era, and what did it mean to us? During that period the colonial status which was our lot disappeared; we grew in stature and asserted ourselves among the Commonwealth of British nations; trading posts disappeared to be replaced by the trading system which prevailed between great powers; Canada came to be represented abroad in all the capitals of the world; a mature Canada signed its own treaties, without having to call upon another country to set its seal upon them; Canada became the world granary, so to speak; on Vimy ridge in 1917, Canada suffered and shed its blood for the sacred cause of freedom; Canada was able to respond generously to the plea of one of the greatest men of this century, Sir Winston Churchill, who uttered within these very walls, when freedom was being crushed under Nazi heels, these memorable words: "Give us the tools and we will do the job!"

[Mr. Rochon.]

During that period also Canada became the sponsor of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to put a stop to aggression by the U.S.S.R.; Canada, through its various secretaries of state for external affairs, advocated steps accepted by the United Nations; Canada became a partner of its giant neighbour beyond the 45th parallel, in a position to act as a buffer between the two greatest world powers, Russia to the north and the United States of America to the south.

In certain quarters, Mr. Chairman, English-speaking as well as French-speaking confederation seems to be entirely wrong; one side feels it is the victim of an arrogant majority and the other blames the authorities for being too lenient towards a minority.

That we in Quebec have not always had our proper share, that the constitutional agreement of the British North America Act might not have been respected to the letter, I will not pretend that it is completely without foundation. Some of it even a lot of it is true; but if you stop and think, might it not be that we have been ill-served by our own individualism? Might we not have asked, at a conference table, a better observance of the agreements? Instead of crying "The damn English", instead of driving them to exasperation and insulting them, might we not have been more practical?

The unfortunate part of it might also have been our failure to reach an earlier awareness of our own worth, a worth which, today, brings home to all provinces of Canada the fact that the country needs Quebec, our thinkers, our scientists, our engineers and our technicians.

The unfortunate part of it also might be that we lock ourselves in our ivory tower and believe, as some of our compatriots, that we can live without Canada, not realizing that separatism would lead us to a very sad end. Fortunately, a very small part of the population thinks this way.

On the other hand Mr. Chairman, there are some who feel the authorities are too lenient towards the vocal minority of Quebec. I blame those of my Anglo-Canadian compatriots who look with a jaundiced eye upon our efforts to assert ourselves and who feel that we should be playing second fiddle. They do as much harm to the Canadian nation as those Quebecers who favour a separate nation. Fortunately, there is only a handful of them, in a century that is above their comprehension, and they are condemned by those they would fawn upon. One thing they forget