

The Budget—Mr. Matheson

economically? What is the purpose of setting up a system of social welfare and social legislation on a body economic that cannot support it? It seems to me that we must first establish these priorities. I am glad to say that the minister has been finally converted to the idea of priorities. This has been advocated by some of my colleagues and myself for a number of years. I will not claim pride of authorship, but first let us consider those matters which tend toward increasing the productivity of the country. Let us put first things first.

Mr. John R. Matheson (Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, there are times when it is a virtue to get to the point, and I trust I shall make my point without trespassing long on the time of the house. Speaking for myself and my sons, let me say that any person who seeks to destroy Canada is an enemy.

[Translation]

Countries have been doomed because their people lacked the will to survive, because they lacked the courage to fight back against evil. In my lifetime I have seen countries succumb to a few fascist rogues, and other countries succumb to a few communist rogues. I do not intend to see Canada succumb to a few separatist rogues.

[English]

My country is Canada—sea to sea. Every inch of it is mine by birthright and without fences. Within these vast borders there must never be a limit to our search for justice, for generosity, for accommodation. But no part of my country is negotiable, least of all for me the beautiful province of my birth and my boyhood. Members of my family have died overseas for Canada. How can I betray her at home or permit the dismemberment of “mon pays merveilleux”?

[Translation]

Our beloved Canada is not a mere accident of geography; it is a spiritual adventure that transcends both language and race. She is worthy of being possessed only by the large of heart. “Mon jardin, ce n'est pas un jardin, c'est la plaine!” We must live with the separatists, those “little foxes” whose ambition is to carve themselves, right in the midst of us, empires to the measure of their pettiness, but they must not be permitted to destroy our ancestral heritage.

[Mr. Lambert.]

[English]

Perhaps we of this centennial parliament have the duty now to declare that we stand firmly on guard for Canada. We stand on guard for all Canadians, present and future. We are the trustees of diverse traditions, of priceless resources and to no lesser extent are we the trustees of freedom for all Canada's sons. Nobody doubts that in the proper way we can produce a better constitutional instrument than we now possess. No one must doubt our resolution and determination to continue as a Canadian sovereignty.

[Translation]

The contest between love and hate—between faith and doubt—is not something new. There always have been separatists among us—those who hate the idea of a Canada not in their own image. Victory for the grand design must be won anew in each generation. May I refer to the words of one of Canada's great heroes of the past. Laurier speaking in French at Quebec city on St. Jean Baptiste day 1889 said this:

Our country is not confined to the territory overshadowed by the citadel of Quebec; our country is Canada—the fertile lands bordered by the Bay of Fundy, the Valley of the St. Lawrence, the region of the Great Lakes, the Prairies of the West, the Rocky Mountains, the lands washed by the famous ocean where breezes are said to be as sweet as the breezes of the Mediterranean. Our fellow countrymen are not only those in whose veins runs the blood of France.—As far as I am concerned, loudly do I proclaim it, those are my fellow countrymen. I am a Canadian.

I love Canada and while many millions like me live, she will never be deserted nor betrayed.

[English]

A few months later, speaking in English Sir Wilfrid said the following in Toronto:

In the face of this universal distrust, the duty of the Liberal party is to promote, or rather to continue, the policy of hope and exertion for mutual respect and confidence. In the face of disintegration, if disintegration be simply hinted at, it is the duty of the Liberal party to stand firm by the principle of confederation. I do not believe certainly that confederation is the last word of Canada's destiny. It can be looked at simply as a transient state; but whenever the change comes, the change must be a step forward and not a step backward... I am a Liberal and I believe in movement, in progress; but I do not believe in inconsiderate changes... Still less would I be of those who clamour for a constitutional change, because the state of things that now exists comes into conflict with their personal prejudices and opinions.

If any there are amongst my fellow countrymen of French origin who have ever dreamed of forming themselves into a small community of Frenchmen on the banks of the St. Lawrence, I am not one of them. I am not one of them, I say—let my words be heard by friend or foe.