

*Official Languages*

we can develop our own by helping our young people, such as those from the Trois-Rivières choir. We have many such organizations. It is high time, I believe, that the federal government and the provincial governments should allocate some money to youth organizations such as those. These are not organizations eager to destroy everything. We should stop financing the latter and open the doors wide to the former.

It does not behoove me too much to discuss provincial policy, but, as I am a citizen of Quebec, I have the right to express an opinion. We spend, I repeat, thousands of dollars for cultural exchanges with foreign countries, when we have no money to help our own youth to acquire a certain degree of culture.

I saw some young people in Montreal on Wednesday night. They were not hippies, nor were they the kind that are to be found on street corners throwing stones in the name of Quebec separatism. They were smiling young Canadians, who were full of life and who have faith in the future of their country.

And we, as members of parliament, would not help these young people who will continue tomorrow the good work we have undertaken. I swear to you that, on Wednesday night, when I saw those young people from Trois-Rivières, I was sure that they had not been assimilated.

And I shall repeat here that even if we French-speaking Canadians are only a minority in Canada, we shall probably still be here in 50 or 100 years. It is a fact that any minority made up of cowardly, irresponsible and destructive people is bound to disappear. On the other hand, any minority composed of vigilant, determined and responsible people will survive anywhere, even in India. That is what we must recognize.

And to think that in the province of Quebec there are some who maintain that we are in the process of losing our language. Now I say it here, in this federal parliament: one hundred years ago, we were not even one million French-speaking Canadians in Quebec, while now we number six million. Are we disappearing? And the quality of spoken French is much higher than that which we knew a mere 40 years, and even 30 years ago.

My father, who is 81 years old to-day and still going strong, lives in Rouyn. He attended school four or five years; he did not learn much French, and he never learned English. On the other hand, nowadays our youngsters all attend school at least up to the 11th or 12th grade.

[Mr. Caouette.]

The quality of the French language is better now than 25 years ago, and we will hear prophets of doom claim in Quebec that we are in the process of extinction. They will disappear one day, indeed when we die, but as long as I live, in Canada, I will remain above all a French-speaking Canadian. That is my status, and it is not a special status. It is a natural right just like the one enjoyed by the English-speaking Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, we have enough of those who spread panic in the province. This morning, I was reading in *Le Devoir* an article on René Lévesque, leader of the *Parti Québécois*, who stated—everybody knows his political platform—that we had to secede, then try to unite in order to establish an economic association. We are part of Confederation, let us remain in it. Let us improve the situation if we are not satisfied.

Similarly, when we say that the French-speaking Canadians of Quebec contribute 30 per cent of the national budget, that is a large amount; however, those who are not French-speaking supply for their part 70 per cent of it.

Even Mr. Gilles Grégoire's salary, when he was here was paid in a proportion of 70 per cent by English-speaking taxpayers and of only 30 per cent by French-speaking ones.

We are told in Quebec that we are about to disappear, while Mr. Lévesque, when told about the possibility of Créditistes getting involved in provincial politics, said yesterday that this would only help—

—to confuse the issues—

On the contrary, this would clear things up.

—and to put off the taking of the necessary stands and decisions. Anyone who is the least bit sensitive can see that there is a vacuum in Quebec—

He did not think that one up.

—and that the two old parties are no longer in the game. Opportunists may think there is something in this for them, but they will not be able to confuse the issues much longer.

Lévesque dixit. He goes on, and he sees things very clearly:

The pro-sovereignty member for Laurier stated that at a time when Quebec is trying to move towards a clear choice, the attempt of Caouette's group, if at all realistic, will only spread confusion.

You will agree with me that his position is not so clear as all that! We know that some people, instead of giving their vote to the