

The Constitution

more humility. His past attitudes make him more than suspect.

It was his government, Mr. Speaker, that during the October, 1970, crisis when it was a matter of seeking out some thirty young terrorists did not hesitate with the co-operation of the police to put under arrest and detain without warrants some 450 people whose only crime was to continue to believe in the socialism the Prime Minister had himself advocated up until the time he joined what he elegantly described as the Liberal centre of intellectual decay.

One should not forget, indeed, that the Prime Minister was and remains the chairman of the cabinet committee on national security and in that capacity must bear responsibility for the actions that were taken and, consequently, the general directives that were given. Well, judging from the information that filtered through during the past ten years the Prime Minister never even bothered to really find out what had happened and people are still waiting for his excuses to Quebeckers, be they leftists, unjustly deprived of their citizens' rights and their fundamental freedoms.

Until the McDonald commission clearly assesses the respective responsibilities of cabinet members and police departments, I, for one, hold the present Prime Minister above all responsible for the thoughtless imposition of the War Measures Act and all the police and other abuses that resulted from it.

In any case, as long as we live in a democratic society, I do not see the need—and I do say the need—to entrench human rights in the Constitution of Canada. It is enough for me that these rights be provided for in specific federal or provincial legislation with enough flexibility to make them more explicit with the evolution of our society and indeed for the addition of new rights that are not yet clearly defined.

Concerning the language rights, I hope they will be recognized for French-speaking people outside Quebec with as much generosity as those of the English-speaking residents in Quebec. But as these rights are very closely related to the provincial jurisdiction over education, I do not see why it should be urgent or necessary to enshrine them in the constitution at the risk of giving rise to quarrels like those the past generations have known. But I think it is the duty of a responsible federal government to help the provinces financially to establish an education system in the second language. On the other hand, I do not want the provinces to be forced, I want them to be permitted, I want them to be invited, I want them to be respected. That is the difference between the Liberals and I. But what I am really against, is that acting on the suggestion of his leader, one of the cabinet ministers should have the presumption to undercut at its very base the historical foundation of the right of Francophones to receive an education in their mother tongue. Did not the Secretary of State and Minister of Communications (Mr. Fox) go as far as to denounce the thesis of the two founding peoples, on the

pretext that this expression could give rise to semantic difficulties? But making the two great linguistic communities takes away any justification for Francophones outside Quebec who demand their own schools.

As Marcel Adam wrote—I might finish with that, Mr. Speaker. As Marcel Adam wrote, I do not quote the “blues” yet, in the paper *La Presse* of October 1, in refusing to use the expression “two founding peoples”, on what ground would Mr. Fox enshrine the language rights in the constitution?

I regret, Mr. Speaker, that my time has run out. I had more things to say, but I consider it as a privilege to have been able to express myself on behalf of thousands of Quebeckers, and to have had the possibility, in a desperate gesture, to ask these Liberals on the other side to show a minimum of respect, only a minimum, for the aspirations of millions of Quebeckers, as I did today.

Mr. Roger Simmons (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of Environment): And now, Mr. Speaker, after that irrelevant tirade, let us get back to the motion.

● (2130)

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, when we as students of history, whether Canadian or otherwise, look back on events, unless we are steeped pretty deeply in them or are graduate students of them, which I am not, we tend to identify certain milestones as though they were simple, uncomplicated or harmonious events. So, in general terms, we tend to associate a date with the act of union or the adoption of the maple leaf as our national flag. In so doing, it seems to me, unless we delve more deeply into the event, we are often not aware of the reservations, for example, which would have been expressed at the Charlottetown conference by some of the participants or the bitter acrimony which accompanied the fight for confederation in Newfoundland in the years from 1946 to 1948.

It seems to me that in respect of the proposal before us now we will find ourselves in an analogous situation a few years down the road. We are too close to it now, the emotions of the people are too tender, our minds are too cluttered by conflicting viewpoints from all sides to appreciate the ultimate magnitude of the step we are contemplating with respect to the resolution before us. An event such as this must by its very nature generate frustration and produce misunderstanding and misapprehension; it must lend itself to misrepresentation of the kind that I heard just two or three hours ago on a national radio show, the CBC's “As it Happens”, when the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) perpetrated on the Canadian people an unfortunate misrepresentation, unfortunate perhaps but obvious. He alleged in that program this evening that the document which is now before the House constitutes an effort by the Prime Minister, as he said, to create a unitary state with all the power vested in one order of government.