

they are no longer that—groups have emerged that are prepared to tear up and destroy everything.

Since fortunately, Mr. Speaker, most Canadians are contra-revolutionary in spirit, we will get together and try to rebuild our country with the same diversity that has kept us together for 124 years.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to individual and collective values, there are two concepts I would like to discuss with my friends today, two concepts that form the very basis of this country. The first concept is dualism. Canadian duality is a fact. It is mentioned practically every year when we discuss legislation. We talk about it and in some parts of the country it has become a very important issue indeed. The second concept is regionalism, another basic concept which we believe is very important in this country, because of our geography, because of the vast territory this country covers, a country that doesn't make sense with its east-west orientation, a country that wants to unite regions that are so totally different.

First of all, our linguistic duality is based on historic, legal and political concepts. Although some may not realize this, Mr. Speaker, linguistic duality will always be a scapegoat in national conflicts. One hundred and twenty-four years after the British North America Act was passed, a reluctance to accept this linguistic duality still exists among Canadians.

Not so long ago, Mr. Speaker, and I saw it happened myself, men used to anglicize their names and forbid their children to speak their mother tongue—

Mr. Prud'homme: In order to succeed in life!

Mr. Gauthier: —as my colleague from Saint-Denis just said, in order to “get on in life” as we used to say. To succeed, they changed their names and no longer spoke French.

In spite of it all, the situation is not hopeless. Francophones can still be found in the regions. They are the majority in Quebec.

Over the last 30 years, we have made some progress, and I was part of it. Let me recount some historical facts so that we have some indications to better understand

the situation. It probably began in 1961 with the Heeney Commission, the Civil Service Commission of Canada, which agreed that every Canadian should have the right to service in French or in English from the federal government.

In 1962, the Glasco Commission said the same thing. The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, that is the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission, was created to, and I quote, “inquire into and report upon the existing state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada and to recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races, taking into account the important contribution made by the ethnic and cultural groups of Canada.”

In 1965, Mr. Speaker, the Commission concluded, and I quote from the Report:

Canada, without being fully conscious of the fact, is passing through the greatest crisis in its history.

Mr. Speaker, I submit to you that we also are passing now through a serious crisis here in this country.

In 1966, Lester B. Pearson stated in this House “the principle that both francophone and anglophone candidates are entitled to a job in the federal government and will enjoy the same consideration and have the same opportunity to work in the language of their choice.”

In 1978, Parliament passed an Act to amend the Criminal Code in order to allow the concerned parties to ask for a trial in either official languages. In 1979, the Pepin-Robarts Commission—it is now very fashionable to refer to Pepin-Robarts—recommended that the Constitution be amended in order to protect minority rights in some areas. In 1980, the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on Official Languages was set up. I give credit for that to the then Prime Minister, the Right Hon. Joe Clark, who in 1979 had granted the first meeting of this Official Languages Committee. In 1982, the official and equal status of French and English in federal institutions was enshrined in the Constitution. In 1983, Parliament passed a resolution on the linguistic rights of francophones in Manitoba, and a second resolution in 1984.