

RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, in the Canada of 1969, good faith and understanding, fundamental though they are to the continued development of this country, are not by themselves enough. To them must be added other ingredients: energy, discipline, a sense of urgency. The exercise in which we have engaged ourselves — making modern our constitutional framework to permit a more equitable distribution of resources and opportunities among the people of Canada — this exercise, is a complicated one. It demands of us the best that our imagination and our experience and our political skills are able to provide.

There were some suggestions at the conference that Canadians face challenges more pressing than the reformation and redrafting of our constitution, that our energies would be better expended in seeking solutions, for instance, to current problems which require no constitutional amendment. These arguments are persuasive because they are to a large extent true. It is of little use to draft a new constitution if in the meantime financial pressures upon the many levels of government become unbearable. It is, to a degree, illusory to speak in terms of a bold new plan for the future if we cannot ease the intolerable conditions of poverty in which too many Canadians now live.

These arguments, I repeat, are persuasive but they are not compelling; nor do I think that they were intended to be compelling. They were intended to remind us of a very important aspect of our labours, but they were not, I believe, made in the sense that constitutional review must take second place. For if we were now to abandon the long-run for the short-run, we would have overlooked an ingredient in our life which we dare not fail to consider. That ingredient is the future.

PROBLEM OF POLLUTION

Even as we examine our constitution and discuss the current pressures which bear upon all levels of government, we know that there are other pressures which have scarcely been defined, let alone brought under control. The longer these pressures are allowed to continue unchecked, the more difficult will be our task to deal with them. One such difficulty which comes to mind is likely the greatest challenge to the continuation of life on this planet, the problem of environmental pollution.

Our apparent disinterest or lack of action in regard to this problem, as reflected by the widespread lack of serious study and the infrequent attempts at effective controls, may well govern the quality of life in Canada in the last three decades of this century. This challenge of pollution of our rivers and lakes, of our farmlands and forests and of the very air we breathe, cannot be met effectively in our federal state without some constitutional reform or clarification. It is important that we know which level of government is responsible and, if both, in

what way they are ready to co-operate through the use of the spending power and other devices to permit these problems to be tackled properly.

I believe this is true of many other problems which are sometimes brought to the attention of this House, problems such as urban renewal of housing and urban transport. These problems cannot be dealt with properly because the present constitution is either silent or vague about the level of government which has the legal competence to tackle them. Until the constitution is brought into the twentieth century in some of these respects, governments are, to a large degree, powerless to solve the problems either by acting alone or in co-operation with other levels of government. These are current difficulties which face Canadians and are spawned by this technological age; they could not have been foreseen 100 years ago.

Many of the subjects that we discussed, such as the spending power, which perhaps seemed theoretical to many, are at the heart of all these questions. We are very often asked, as a Government, to do something about a problem that is not under federal jurisdiction. We are very often asked by some to do something which can only be done through the use of the spending power, and then we are told by others that the spending power should not be used. So it is important to clarify these issues. The examples I have given are only a few of the many reasons why there is a great, pressing need for this constitutional task to be moved forward.

Another of the reasons, and perhaps more important still, is the temper of the youth of this country. There are in Canada today more than ten million persons below the age of 25. These young people are not content to permit the future of Canada to be fettered in any fashion by the failure of governments to proceed promptly and adequately with these various tasks and with the constitutional task which lies at the bottom of any action. Forty nine per cent of the population of Canada will not accept a relaxed and casual attitude toward these preparations for our second century.

NEED FOR CONTINUING PROGRESS

I trust that by saying this I shall not be accused of injecting an unnecessary note of alarm or crisis or panic into an otherwise contented country. I simply say that there is an urgent need for continuing progress, that we would be misleading ourselves if we did not recognize the mood of the country. We would be misleading ourselves as well if we assumed that we are now past the most difficult part of these discussions. The most difficult parts are still to come....

Notwithstanding these caveats, I wish to say how pleased I am with the progress made at the session of the conference which was held this week. I wish to say as well that I anticipate continued progress and at an acceptable pace. We are already setting in motion provisions for a meeting of the