

Mr. Caouette: To look at history, Mr. Speaker, some time ago, I was speaking on television in my area of northwestern Quebec. At that time, I was giving the history of the second world war when General de Gaulle had to leave his country and go into exile for some time in Great Britain, when Marshal Pétain had to take over and move the seat of the French government from Paris to Vichy. At that time, Mr. Speaker, I was a young man of the province of Quebec, a member of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste and all French-Canadian associations in Quebec. At that time, the intellectuals who met in Montreal these last three days were defending Marshal Pétain just as we were. We were then blaming the actions of General de Gaulle, because we felt that Pétain, standing up to the invader in his own country at a time when France was unprepared to face a world war, had no other alternative to what he did. At that time, we were supporting Pétain and condemning de Gaulle, and some people of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, gathered in Montreal two days ago, were of that opinion.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Caouette: It was said Pétain has been charged with collaboration. But I have an explanation. When an armed bandit breaks into a home, waving his gun, Mr. Speaker, many people are forced to do his bidding, because they are driven to the wall, and this is what happened to Marshal Pétain. Nevertheless, Pétain was sentenced to death; his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment and after having been dishonourably discharged by General de Gaulle's followers, died stripped of his rank and of all the glorious titles he had won during the first world war.

Mr. Speaker, General de Gaulle may try today to tell Quebec: Liberate yourselves, liberate yourselves, but it was not so long ago that Algeria, under the French régime, and the Algerian people fought an internecine war for 7½ years to obtain their independence, which led them where? Where they are now, with a standard of living decidedly lower than the one they formerly enjoyed, and surely that is the example General de Gaulle has in mind at this time.

Mr. Speaker, all this means that we can get along without the advice or intervention of General de Gaulle or any other head of state, whether from Great Britain or any other country in the world. Our people,

Comment on Statement by General de Gaulle
whether they speak English, French, Ukrainian, Polish or Italian, in brief, all Canadians, are able to develop policies that are respectful of each and every one of their countrymen. The aspirations of the French-speaking Canadians are the same as those of the English-speaking Canadians. By showing mutual respect, we will set an example to the world with regard to political freedom and economic security.

Mr. Speaker, reference was made earlier to this conference of all the Canadian provinces which is now taking place in Toronto and where changes to be made in the constitution are being discussed. Everyone agrees that certain changes should be made in our constitution, but the provinces are not meeting simply to discuss the problem of language, French or English. It is a question of life or death for each of the provinces, for each one of them is faced with great economic and financial difficulties which prevents it from developing according to its own aspirations and possibilities.

And here, I appeal to the Prime Minister. The central government can help all the provinces, it can co-operate to maintain the unity so greatly desired by enabling each province, from an economic point of view, to make the most of its possibilities, its intellectual resources, its potential. Then, it will no longer fear the intervention of foreign leaders, of foreign countries in the administration of our national affairs.

Canadian affairs are our concern. We do not interfere in the affairs of France, England or any other country. Let us continue in that direction and through mutual respect by all, we shall build a greater Canada, a more prosperous Canada, which doubtless will set, from every point of view, an example for the whole world.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

[English]

Mr. A. B. Patterson (Fraser Valley): Mr. Speaker, we in the Social Credit party join with the others in this house in deploring this further intervention by General de Gaulle in the affairs of this country.

• (3:10 p.m.)

Availing himself of the opportunity presented at the time of Expo, General de Gaulle chose to make his first unwarranted intervention into our national affairs. This most recent intervention is completely unwarranted, uncalled for, distasteful and unacceptable to Canadians everywhere.