

tyranny. Civil war has not been of such dimensions as to set family against family. No one seriously threatens our borders or conspires with our citizens against the authority of the state. There is no religious persecution, no widespread destitution. We have no colonies....

It is only when we seem to abandon reason and to let violence and extremism take over that we make the headlines of the world press. A bomb in a post-box - threats of violence against the Queen. These events, however unrepresentative they may be, are good copy....

Travelling abroad as a younger man I wondered why there was so little news of Canada in the local press, even in world centres like New York, London and Paris. It annoyed me when these same newspapers carried despatches from other smaller and what I considered less-important countries. Now I recognize the truth of the saying that no news is good news....

BACKGROUND OF AN ENGLISH CANADIAN

...I propose to put forward briefly the convictions I have formed in the process of learning to be a Canadian. Like the French philosopher Descartes, while still searching I have reached a number of conclusions. First, my credentials and background. I speak as an English-speaking Canadian, second generation, of Scottish percentage, a representative of one of the so-called founding races. I was educated and lived the first 30 years of my life on the Prairies. Until I moved to Ottawa I had virtually no contact with French-speaking Canadians, and knew little about them. I knew a good deal more about my fellow-Canadians who had immigrated from the Ukraine, from Poland and from Germany, and more about my fellow-Canadians from the Maritimes. I lived in the heart of one of our two solitudes....

If this were a unique personal experience, I should not bother to describe it. I have found that, far from being unique, it is typical of my generation of English-speaking Canadians living outside the Province of Quebec, including many of my fellow Members of Parliament.

TWO CANADIAN SOCIETIES

From this experience and observation, I draw a simple and obvious conclusion; there are two societies in Canada, an English-speaking society comprising various ethnic groups, to which I belong, and a French-speaking society. I prefer not to talk about two "nations" as my French-Canadian friends do, because nation is an ambiguous word in the English language, unfortunately with an emotional content that inhibits rational discussion....

The second simple and obvious conclusion is that the existence of these two societies is fully compatible with the development of our nation-state. Canadian history is there to prove it. Under its federal constitution and with its two societies, Canada has grown, prospered and taken its place among the other nation-states and does not suffer by comparison with any.

I have learned a fact that is commonplace to you who live in Montreal: French-speaking Canadians are determined to preserve their peculiar heritage

and unquestionably will do so. This "French fact" is commonplace to you here in Montreal. I can assure you from personal experience it is by no means fully understood and accepted in all parts of Canada....

CANADA NOT A MELTING-POT

As I learned these simple facts, I abandoned any ideas that I might have absorbed from my youth about Canada being a great melting-pot which in due course would produce unhyphenated Canadians, as much alike as possible. Instead, I began to catch a glimpse of the true destiny of Canada as a country in which diversity is something to be preserved and nurtured, a model for the many multi-national states that have recently emerged and are now emerging, and a counterpart of the movement towards political consolidation in Europe and elsewhere....

A bilingual, bicultural Canada I have come to accept and to value. I have not become reconciled to the existence of two solitudes, of two societies that live apart, unable to communicate effectively and easily, strangers to one another. I have no sympathy whatever with those who want to keep French-Canadians, or for that matter English-speaking Canadians, to themselves uncontaminated by contact with their fellow Canadians.

Learning to be a Canadian not only involves learning to accept and to value diversity, it also means learning to communicate with those who belong to the other society and to share in common experiences and common enterprises, to live side by side anywhere in Canada. It includes learning to be a member of both societies. Impossible? Impractical? Not any more impossible or impractical than the survival of the French-Canadian society in the North American continent must appear to those who have not witnessed this miracle.

I can think of no better place to begin learning to be a member of both societies than in the Parliament and Government of Canada. One day, I believe, the capital of Canada will be claimed by both societies, a truly bilingual, bicultural community.

THE UNIQUENESS OF QUEBEC

This leads me from the question of the relationship between the two societies to the relationship between Quebec and the rest of Canada. As the homeland of French-Canadians, Quebec has a special place in Confederation; as such it is not, and cannot be, a province like other provinces of Canada. For historical reasons, Quebec has a special responsibility for the preservation and nurturing of the peculiar heritage of French-Canadians.

As a result, I have come to expect the Province of Quebec to be more jealous of its rights under the British North America Act than other provinces, and my expectations have not been disappointed. When Quebec insists upon exercising its constitutional rights and responsibilities, in the pension field or otherwise, I see no reason to think that the country is breaking up.

Nor, on the other hand, is Quebec failing to discharge its responsibilities by agreeing to continue to participate in existing cost-sharing programmes or to join in new cost-sharing programmes with the Federal Government, if it considers this to be in the interests of the people of Quebec.