

*The Address—Mr. Lafreniere*

be honoured by the visit of Her Royal Highness Princess Margaret who will take part in the ceremonies of the British Columbia centennial. This royal solicitude reminds us that Canada is one of the oldest members of the commonwealth of nations.

Mr. Speaker, despite all my good will, it will be understood that I cannot analyse the huge program submitted by the government for this session. The study of all this legislation will require strenuous and consistent efforts on the part of each and every hon. member. There are a great number of them, and many are still very young, so much so that it could be said that this parliament is the parliament of youth and of the future. May I be allowed to congratulate them, whatever their political colour, on having been chosen by their respective constituencies as official representatives of the population.

Mr. Speaker, you have acquired the reputation of getting out of trouble, with as much wit as tact, any member who gets himself into certain difficulties in this house. With the new members of this parliament, you will surely have numerous opportunities to exercise that skill and to show your customary impartiality.

I wish to congratulate the government for its intention to study the advisability of installing in this house an improved system of simultaneous translation. Since such a system is not working today, I am sure that my English-speaking listeners will no doubt think that I have delivered a good speech.

Before closing, Mr. Speaker, I wish to express, because of very special circumstances, a few ideas concerning the population of our country.

I believe that my constituency of Quebec-Montmorency is a reduced image of the general aspect of Canada. We have French Canadians, English Canadians, Irish, Scots, as well as other fellow-citizens from other racial descent, and of various religious beliefs. Ours is a happy community where work is done in harmony and where no group ever attempts to interfere with another.

For too many years, Mr. Speaker, a few politicians have attempted to create disruption and disunity among the people of Canada by playing on racial and religious prejudices. In the name of the province of Quebec, which I particularly represent, I wish to say to the house that we are proud of the co-existence and cohabitation of the two great races which constitute the population of our country. We of Quebec earnestly want national unity through the respect of the rights and privileges of each and everyone of our citizens, whatever their race, religion or language.

[Mr. Lafreniere.]

(Text):

Mr. Speaker, I feel that I should repeat this statement in English. Whatever has been said before, I want you to know that we from Quebec want national unity in the respect of everyone's rights and privileges, justice for each and every Canadian citizen. We members of parliament should give an example to the nation and never speak from now on about prejudice of race and religion.

(Translation):

I have said, Mr. Speaker, in the respect of the rights and privileges of everyone. I wish to add that the word respect, in its true meaning, includes esteem which in its term is conducive to the most cordial friendship.

Our French and English cultures are different but they are not incompatible. The mingling of our cultures and of our different racial qualities is a source of enrichment rather than a subject of contradiction for our country. For a Canadian citizen, whether by birth or by naturalization, there is no barrier to success if he has talent, initiative and willingness to work.

As for us, members of parliament who represent the different races of our country, our function can be compared to that of an educator and our duty is to give to the Canadian people a living example of national unity and mutual understanding between the nations that, by God's will, must live on the same territory, to build a country which is already playing a major part in world affairs.

We realize that the Prime Minister, who presides over the destinies of our country, is above all moved by a great spirit of justice towards all and each of the Canadian citizens without distinction of race or religion.

In the last election campaign, we reasserted the concept of the constitution and we have taken one more step towards the transformation of the concept of confederation into greater national unity. Our forefathers under Macdonald and Cartier developed western Canada; they settled the country from one ocean to the other. The task undertaken now by our Prime Minister and his government is the development of northern Canada. These northern lands hold vast unworked riches, hydro-electric resources, various minerals and practically all the resources required to expand substantially our present economic structure.

The province of Quebec has chosen two thirds of its representatives amongst the conservative candidates. That is a striking fact. There have been differences of opinion and difficulties in the past but, to me, the last election has the same significance for all those living in the province of Quebec. That