

North American continent, there lives a noble people, who take pride in their past, who look with confidence upon the dawn of a new century, a people who live in a country with boundless horizons, and whose aspirations are worldwide in magnitude.

The violent discussions of the last session, the bitter wrangling which took place are now things of the past. The bitter blows that were dealt and sometimes hurt, are forgotten. The Centennial session started a few days ago. The first anniversary of confederation, which has perhaps not always been consistent with the aspirations of every ethnic group in our country, has nevertheless made of our country one of the greatest nations of the world, respected and heeded. On April 27 last, Montreal, its metropolis, welcomed the whole world and laid before it the exhibition "Man and his World" which will be, as reported in the world press, the event of the century.

Mr. Speaker, instead of going into an analysis of the major legislation announced in the Speech from the Throne, others have done it and more will do so; instead of taking you into the verdant areas of my great constituency of Laval and have you admire the sites; instead of speaking of this second largest city of Quebec, the city of Laval—I will have the opportunity during the budget debate to tell you of its needs—in short, instead of following the established custom I felt—after living through the historic moments of the official opening of the world's fair, as most of my colleagues—that I could take a few minutes to give you, in the name of my electors and in my own name, their impressions and mine of the century which is ending and of the next one opening before us into such a promising future filled with hope and days of glory.

If, Mr. Speaker, you will read the history of nations, if you will skim through each of the eras, you will realize that, in ancient times as well as in the Middle Ages, in the earliest times as well as in our modern days, when a state sought to increase its strength or enlarge its territory, it joined with its neighbours, and when a nation sought to acquire interior strength and foreign respect, it entered into alliances with its friends; the same was true when countering the aims of one or more overly ambitious neighbours was involved. History supplies the names of several well known alliances entered into for common defence.

That is about what happened in Canada in 1867, when Upper and Lower Canada united

with the maritime provinces to protect themselves should the Americans have too great designs for our land, or should their influence be felt too strongly as compared to the extraordinary advantages arising out of the opening of the way to the Atlantic and the St. Lawrence, which provided the Maritime provinces with an invaluable passage to the sea.

• (9:10 p.m.)

Faced with this eventuality, and for other reasons also, the English Canadians of Upper Canada, who believed that if ever the country became American they would lose their own identity, and the French Canadians, who feared for their language and their religion, accepted without taking too much exception, what was a marriage of reason in which both groups saw one of the best ways to protect themselves and to remain themselves. Thus, in 1864, the Commons of Canada addressed to the government of Her Majesty Queen Victoria a request to have a measure passed. I quote:

A measure to unite the colonies of Upper and Lower Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island under a single government.

The said measure was to be based on the resolutions passed at the conference held in Quebec city on October 10, 1864. The project was accepted and 1867 saw the beginning of that confederation whose centennial we are celebrating this year.

I was saying a moment ago, Mr. Speaker, that one of the reasons for confederation was to protect the identity of English Canadians of Upper Canada and the language and faith of French Canadians of Lower Canada. But the main reason was the magnificent dream of the fathers of confederation. At this stage, Mr. Speaker, I will undoubtedly be allowed to recall these words by Mr. Robert Choquette, former associate commissioner of the centennial commission. I quote:

For many, in 1864, whoever talked about a union between the Maritime colonies and Canada was slightly touched; those who were bold enough to imagine a Dominion from one ocean to the other were ready for confinement. However, a handful of men with vision materialized that thought. It was not easy. They had to struggle against ignorance here and chauvinism there, the distrust of some, the intolerance of others. They had to fight against all those who refused to look ahead for great things. To the defeatists, to the cynics, those dreamers replied with virile optimism. They did not delude themselves. They knew full well that nothing can be built without effort, that the only construction easily built is the sand castle due to vanish with the first wave. They did not