

I would feel guilty, at this particular time, if I did not acknowledge the tremendous work done by our very active Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) to insure the equality and justice rightly claimed by the French-speaking Canadians, though not at the expense of the English-speaking Canadians who are entitled, not only as a majority group but also as individuals, to our respect, our consideration for the priceless contribution they have made to the building and the preservation of our country.

[*English*]

May I also mention the co-operation of the ministers and of my colleagues in the Liberal party. Their attitude since the 1968 election has made a special contribution to the improvement of the relations between French speaking and English speaking Canadians. We must note that in Ottawa today French speaking Canadians are not strangers but citizens capable of playing a leading role in the conduct of the affairs of our vast country.

[*Translation*]

Moreover, I would not be true to my belief if I did not admit that several members of the opposition have given me a pleasant surprise because they seem so well-disposed towards the French-speaking Canadians to whom, so far, they were too often satisfied to ask simply: "What do the French Canadians want?"

To recognize the existence of others is already a promising start and augurs well for the future but this is not enough to insure the stability and unity of our country. We must reach, as fast as possible, the following stage which is that of genuine co-operation as equal partners.

Indeed, even if it is pleasant to admit that the general atmosphere which has prevailed in Ottawa for a year permits us to entertain serious hopes of maintaining our country in its present limits, all the people of good will must maintain their dialogue not only at the government level but also at the individual level.

This is certainly a challenge which can be taken up only by those who are courageous, dynamic and who really love their Canadian fatherland. Even if it is conceited and even impolite to quote oneself as an example, I do not hesitate to say that my constituents of Lapointe have done it successfully.

I shall certainly astonish quite a few people by disclosing that about 20 per cent of my constituents are not French-speaking; nonetheless, in no other place in Canada perhaps,

*The Address—Mr. Marceau*

are the relations better and the mood nicer and more serene, for while each group has preserved its own personality, we have all recognized the relevance of dialogue, co-operation, and respect for individual rights.

I would now like to point out the valuable contribution in that field of such companies as Price Brothers and Aluminum of Canada, who have succeeded in integrating and adapting themselves to our regional environment, where they play a prominent role.

Inspired by what seems to be the great majority of my constituents of Lapointe, and strongly urging people who are still hesitating, I unequivocally declare myself at one with those who are trying to bring about national unity, whatever the linguistic group to which they belong; I would be ashamed, indeed, to be among those who through cowardice, indifference or laziness, have accepted an office with the ulterior motive of working against the interests they are supposed to serve.

The goal of prime importance which is to preserve national unity while safeguarding the diversity of our country, should not be the exclusive concern of parliamentarians. We shall not be able to achieve it without the vigorous and considered participation of all Canadians, regardless of their origin.

I am particularly happy at this time to find that the throne speech mentions the government's intention to give the franchise to the young people of 18 years of age.

At a time when all good wills and all energies are needed, when young people are required to take their responsibilities and play a positive role in the future of our country, to live and behave like citizens, they should not be deprived any longer of the right to express concretely their approval or their rejection of their rulers, simply because a number of them are not completely reliable.

Since I had the honour to be co-chairman with my colleague for Hamilton-Wentworth (Mr. Gibson) of a committee on the constitution, I shall take the liberty, before ending this statement, of setting forth briefly a few general principles on the problems raised at present by the Canadian constitution as I see them.

In principle, I am in favour of amending the constitution, provided that such amendments bring about a renewal and an adjustment of our federalism which is now less effective after being a hundred years in operation.