

*The Address—Mr. Gauthier*

things and in Ontario today, thank God, we can send our children to French schools, at least at the elementary levels.

At the secondary level there are still a few snags and problems. They will be ironed out I guess, some day, and I hope soon in order to enable the people of Penetanguishene, Midland and Lafontaine to send their children to a homogeneous French secondary school. It is at the secondary level that things seem to drag. This is the area in which we have had the main disputes over the last ten to 12 years. It is no fault of the federal government because it is a matter of provincial jurisdiction as has been stated earlier so rightly by the hon. member for Mississauga. But the provinces make up Canada. And if there are two official languages in Canada, how come I am denied the right to exist at the provincial level? This is something I cannot understand. So, let us be logical and say to the provinces: You must at least recognize the simplest argument of all, that of the two founding peoples, and grant to English-speaking Canadians in Quebec and French-speaking Canadians outside Quebec the right to the most basic services, mainly education, health services, and legal services.

I admit there has been some improvement, a lot of improvement because you only have to look at the number of schools in the past ten years which total nearly a hundred in Ontario. With respect to legal services, you can easily argue your case in French in criminal court today, at least since January 1 of this year. But in civil courts English alone is still being used. As for health services, let us be honest, if you do not live in Ottawa, health services in French are nearly non-existent in Ontario. So those are the challenges to be taken up. Those are not basically difficult problems to solve but you need to have the will and the capacity to do it. And the federal government has supported linguistic minorities where it was needed, at the proper time, with its funds and grants.

As I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, it would have been so much easier to talk about federalism if Ontario had gone with the two official languages of this country. But it was premier Bill Davis himself who torpedoed Bill 89 introduced by my provincial counterpart, Albert Roy, a little over a year ago when he opposed it against a unanimous legislature. He said no to Mr. Roy's bill which was to have given French equal status with English in Ontario.

I wonder how Mr. Davis can now substantiate, for the benefit of his own people in Ontario and for the Canadian people as a whole, the position he expressed in February, 1979, when he said he was prepared to see the language rights entrenched in the constitution. There again I am confused. I cannot understand that French should be refused legal status, that I, a French-speaking Canadian living in Ontario, cannot be allowed to make out in French strictly personal documents such as a will. That seemed to me absolutely elementary. But in Ontario, a will must be registered in English. So I ask myself this question: Am I a first-class citizen? That is what I want to be able to say, what I want to become, what I want to

be. That is no big thing. It is important that the provinces, this parochial attitude the hon. member for Mississauga South was talking about and which concerns us today—

● (1650)

[English]

The parochialism that the hon. member was talking about, that concern with regionalism or the community of communities idea that exists today which was brought forth by some advisers to the former prime minister of this country, presents in my view a very difficult situation because, as a minority in such a situation, I am in conflict. I become the hostage.

[Translation]

The hostage in that game between the Francophone majority in Quebec and the Anglophone majority in Canada. I find it difficult to explain that I do not want to be held hostage in the bargainings between Canada's English-speaking majority and Quebec's French-speaking majority. I mentioned it earlier. I do not believe that any Canadian will ever agree to be an hostage in such a debate.

But that is what I am because, as you will recall, when Mr. Lévesque spoke about the right to education two years ago he said to the other premiers: we are going to establish reciprocity. Reciprocity means that if you recognize in your province the right to a French education, we will recognize the right to an English education. And they said: no, this is not Canada. Canada stands for respect, generosity, recognition of the existence of two founding peoples, the French-speaking and the English-speaking peoples. This is the formula. Once again, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make something clear. Let us not kid ourselves. As proposed by the Péquistes, sovereignty-association does not imply negotiation by a long shot. It implies independence.

Where is the linguistic minority in all this? On one hand, I cannot accept the status quo because it would mean assimilation. And as I have already said, this is a real nightmare for me. The one million Francophones outside Quebec are being assimilated at a fantastic speed. In 1971, 27 per cent of Francophones were assimilated. This means that the day will come when there will be no question of separating Canada because it will already have been divided into two groups, a balkanization of Francophones in Quebec and a balkanization of Anglophones in the rest of Canada. Should this happen, there will not be many cultural, social and linguistic ties between the two groups. We would talk about separating the two entities. I do not know. In such a case, I would be the loser, the Francophones outside Quebec would have to pay, and I find this unacceptable. This is what status quo means.

What Mr. Lévesque is proposing, that is independence for Quebec, would have the same results because who knows what would happen to the linguistic minorities both in Quebec and in the rest of Canada once Quebec is divided from the rest of