

Avoidance of Extremes

Under tutelary federalism, the strength of the Central Government was too often built on the weakness of the provinces. With confederate federalism, the strength of the provinces was established on the weakness of the Federal Government. In my opinion, there should be an endeavour to avoid these two extremes which have been detrimental to Canadians in the past. The decentralization movement, as started in 1963, is sane as it marks the end to the wardship exercised by the Federal Government over the provinces. However, the new, growing strength of the provinces should not be established on the weakness of the Central Government in its own fields of jurisdiction. Such an outcome would not be to the advantage of Canadians, who would sooner or later seek a return to tutelage. More particularly, a strong and prosperous Quebec needs a powerful and dynamic Canada.

That is why the Federal Government has, since 1963, taken back the initiative on the international level by considerably increasing help to under-developed countries. By our cultural-exchange programme with French-speaking countries, we have given a new dimension to our foreign policy that will more accurately reflect the character and contribution of French Canada. Our financial, commercial and fiscal policies were dictated by our industrial development. Therefore, there is now an upswing in the Canadian economy, and unemployment has never been so low since 1945. We are, at last, taking the necessary steps to strengthen the cultural institutions under our jurisdiction. As the editor of "Le Devoir" said on June 16, 1964, we want "a federal state strong and co-ordinated enough to provide an effective government for the country", so that the state will play its part in co-operative federalism in a complete and energetic way.

Finally, I should like to note a final characteristic, another requirement of co-operative federalism. Since it is based on inter-dependence, consultation and co-operation between equals it will not flourish unless Canadian Confederation develops on the principle of equality between the two nations that created it. In other words, the duality of language and culture constitutes one of the bases of co-operative federalism, and it is especially the task of the Central Government to provide it.

Pursuit of Biculturalism

For that purpose, we set up the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in July 1963. This is the first time in our history that a federal Royal Commission has been established jointly with the provinces, that it is made up of an equal number of French-Canadians and of English-Canadians and that all its members are perfectly bilingual. I am convinced that the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission will be up to the complex and vital task which has been entrusted to it.