

they were promised a thorough constitutional reform, the nature and extent of which the No forces did not even consult or ever agree. That is something the Prime Minister knows very well. To say otherwise is to make a statement that the Standing Orders do not allow one to qualify by the only right term.

Indeed, putting his head on the block the Prime Minister promised to amend the constitution but he knows full well that for Quebeckers this reform was in fact a new distribution of powers. If Quebeckers had been told by the Prime Minister that this reform would be limited to unilateral patriation of the constitution, including a bill of fundamental and linguistic rights entrenched in it and that it would only be a way for the federal government to grab the rest of powers and of economic liberties of the provinces, I do not hesitate to say that Quebeckers would have massively rejected such arguments. Most likely, under those circumstances the Yes-side would have won. The No supporters would have dissociated themselves from the Prime Minister of Canada and I do not think I am wrong when I say that Claude Ryan would have dissociated himself from the position of the federal Liberal leader. It is important that Canadians know that the provincial Liberals do not approve the methods used by the Prime Minister of Canada. With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I would like to read two paragraphs from Mr. Ryan. Of course, like us, he dreams about great principles which would be respected throughout Canada, he dreams about an ideal situation as concerns justice and many other things. Of course, this is what Mr. Ryan wishes. We wish the same thing, but we want to respect our present structure. If a change is needed, we must consult the provinces. Mr. Ryan says and I quote:

What I fear personally because of the way things have been going is that we might be led gradually to profound changes in the very nature of the federal structure which governs us.

The man speaking is not a Tory! He is not a separatist!

Until now, the federal structure has been based on the principle of the equality of both levels of government—

Is this clear, my Liberal friends on the other side?

There was no question of subordinating one level of government to the other or of giving one level priority over the other. The method advanced in the federal proposal, asserts the supremacy of the federal government over the provinces.

This is a new political principle which, in my opinion, opens a completely new page in the history of constitutional law and political evolution in Canada. We maintain—

—says Mr. Ryan, still on behalf of the Liberal party—

—that the constitution is the common property and the responsibility of the two levels of government. If we want to bring about major changes which would affect the constitution, these changes must be made with the agreement of both levels of government. Neither one of them can claim the privilege or the right to act alone in these matters which could affect federal relations.

And he adds something interesting about trying to evaluate the referendum in Quebec.

The Constitution

An hon. Member: Do not speak about the referendum; you know nothing about it!

Mr. La Salle: And when I hear, says Mr. Ryan—Can someone tell me the name of the idiot who speaks louder than anyone else? And when I hear, says Mr. Ryan, and I quote, Mr. Speaker:

And when I hear Mr. Trudeau suggest that the No given at the referendum was the same as giving a free hand to the Prime Minister of Canada to impose his concept of constitutional change, I cannot agree on this point either. We fought both for the No vote and for reasonable changes in the federal system of Canadian government, but we have always said that any basic change must be sought and made with the agreement of the two orders of government—

If I had been told:

—concludes Mr. Ryan:

“You are going to chair the No vote committee and will after that be told what to do, what your duty is and shut up”, I would never have chaired the No committee, as you perfectly know. And if I had been told that this was my last chance, that after that sovereignty-association would come, I would never have let myself be caught in such a trap either. For some months, both sides have been joyfully falsifying the true meaning of the results of the referendum held on May 20 of this year. As a well placed witness of that enterprise, as chairman of the No committee, I feel obliged to record my dissent.

It is therefore important in my view that Canadians know the Quebec Liberal party is totally opposed to what Liberals here imply.

That implication by Liberals, who pretend to represent Quebec voters, is false representation as I said. They say it is urgent. How can that be explained, Mr. Speaker? Well, it would have been so easy for Mr. Trudeau, for the Prime Minister, excuse me, to meet with Mr. Ryan and allow Quebec Liberals to make their views known rather than taking immediate decision. As far as we are concerned, we would have preferred that the Right Hon. Prime Minister have another try at a first ministers' meeting, a last minute effort in order to at least have the decency to have that two-year freeze accepted. Let us suppose the ten first ministers accepted patriation with a two-year freeze, we—

An hon. Member: Never!

Mr. La Salle: Somebody says, never. Because the Right Hon. Prime Minister is not interested in having an affirmative answer from the provinces. The Right Hon. Prime Minister's vision of Canada is evidence of his incompetence and his inability to find a solution.

So it is true that to dress his salad the Prime Minister talks about a charter of fundamental and linguistic rights. What he has yet to prove is that fundamental rights are being threatened. Quite the contrary, all Canadian provinces, if I am not mistaken, have their own charter of human rights and I do not know of any case where they are really endangered. What I do know on this point of upholding human rights is that the government of this Prime Minister is not beyond reproach. That is why I urge him to approach the problem with a little