

This observation fits our confederation, and it fits Canada today. If Quebec were to separate, she would be doomed to become a cultural and economic ghetto; English Canada would be assimilated first culturally and then economically and politically by the United States.

Professor Jean Hamelin of Laval makes this penetrating comment on the events of 1867:

Confederation came as a challenge to Quebec, for the province would now have to co-operate in building a unified Canada as well as develop its own tradition. Moreover, the presence of Quebec was a challenge to the other provinces which now had to accept with all of its problems an alien community whose geographical extent would not be limited to Quebec. The general refusal to accept these responsibilities is at the root of the great political crises which have shaken the Dominion ever since.

Both French and English must accept these responsibilities if Canada is to survive. Both cultures must realize that they cannot survive separately. What does the government intend to do to promote this realization?

We read in the Speech from the Throne that the government is committed to the goal of national unity and to furthering the objectives of the Official Languages Act. Commendable objectives, but the crucial factor is the manner of their implementation. During the past four years we have witnessed the rise in popularity of the Parti Québécois, the FLQ crisis and a backlash among English-speaking Canadians in the civil service—not an enviable record. The government must learn that the diplomatic approach in instituting bilingualism and biculturalism is the only approach likely to succeed. And I would think the performance of the Prime Minister yesterday—I have in mind the barbs he directed at certain unnamed members of the opposition—shows he should be the first to learn the necessity for this diplomatic approach.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Symes: I think we would all do well to heed the message of the late Governor General Georges P. Vanier. He said, in part, in his 1967 New Year message:

The measure of our unity has been the measure of our success in the past . . .

If we imagine that we can now go our separate ways within our country, if we think that selfish interests can now take precedence over the national good, if we exaggerate our differences or revel in contention, if we do any of these things, we will promote our own destruction.

Canada owed it to the world, he maintained, to remain united because—

—no lesson is more badly needed than the one our unity can supply, the lesson that diversity need not be the cause for conflict but, on the contrary, may lead to richer and nobler living.

Let us open the windows and the doors of the provinces. Let us look over the walls and see what is on the other side. Let us know one another and that will lead to understanding . . .

I pray God that we may all go forward hand in hand. We can't run the risk of this great country falling into pieces.

Mr. Speaker, Canada is faced with immediate social, economic and political problems. She is also faced with the question of national survival. This twenty-ninth parliament must face these issues squarely, with a sense of immediacy and in a spirit of co-operation. Only with such determination can we build the true north, strong and free.

The Address—Mr. Mackasey

• (1650)

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Verdun): Mr. Speaker, my first duty, a very pleasant one, is to congratulate the Speaker on his reappointment and the Deputy Speaker, on his appointment. They are both wonderful Members of Parliament and I suspect they will be badly needed in the weeks to come.

I congratulate also the mover and seconder of the address. I had the pleasure of meeting both members before their election, having worked in their particular ridings. I was very impressed by their degree of bilingualism.

I was also impressed by the remarks of the hon. gentleman who just sat down. I could not help but note when we voted earlier the number of new faces in the House which, I suspect, is close to 100. Noticeable among them are several ladies. I am sure they will make the House more pleasant, but I must confess that my favourite still remains the very young lady from British Columbia who has graced this House now for several sessions.

I should like as well to thank the people of Verdun who, for five consecutive elections over a period of 10 years, have seen fit to return me to office. Let me tell the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner) that something went wrong with our machinery, since I lost my first poll in four elections, but I have not had time to do much about finding out just where we went wrong. For a while I had hopes that the hon. gentleman might have selected Verdun for his maiden attempt. I am sure this would have been quite a battle as I am afraid we would have had an awful time dividing up the same machinery. I welcome the hon. gentleman to the House as a personal friend. This is a friendship which goes back over many years. Having said that, he can rest assured that he will not necessarily be clear of any barbs I might throw in the future.

Mr. Wagner: Likewise.

Mr. Mackasey: However, he knows that my nature is such I will never resort to personalities.

When one is here for 10 years, he begins to realize that this represents a lengthy period in his life. Perhaps it is not as long as the time spent here by some hon. members, but it is longer than most. These have been 10 very eventful years. I began, naturally, as a backbencher and then became the leader of the national caucus, a parliamentary secretary, a minister without portfolio, the minister of labour and the minister of manpower. The significant thing about each one of these changes was that I moved each and every time from one seat to another. This is the closest I have been placed to the back door of the House of Commons. I almost think that someone has a Pavlovian wish or Freudian desire that my next move will be out the back door. When that happens I can assure you it will be of my own volition, and when I go I will take with me my sense of integrity intact as well as my own concern and feelings for the people of Verdun in particular, and for the people of Canada in general.

I do not intend to talk too long about the throne speech because I may unintentionally be familiar with some of the legislation contained in it. I should have liked to have seen the very persuasive Minister of National Health and