

*Comment on Statement by General de Gaulle*

I am sure that French speaking Canadians throughout Canada will resent the fact that the head of state in another country should seek to advise them as to what course they should take in advancing their best interests. As one who was born in the United Kingdom I know I would deeply resent any suggestion by the government of Great Britain as to how we Canadians ought to conduct our affairs in this country—

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Douglas:**—and I think French speaking Canadians will have a similar feeling of resentment. I think they will also resent the reference to them as abandoned children; abandoned, yes; but children, no. After two centuries of abandonment they are a mature people working with their fellow Canadians to resolve whatever differences of opinion we may have, and seeking to work out a great destiny for Canada, to do this by ourselves, knowing we can do it without any intrusion by anyone else.

I think French speaking Canadians will not be enticed by any nostalgic appeal for a new form of imperialism. In Canada this year we are celebrating our one hundredth anniversary, and our pride in that anniversary is in the fact that we have shed all forms of imperialism and are now a sovereign nation. I do not think French speaking Canadians, any more than any other Canadians, want to shed one form of imperialism only to assume the shackles of some other form of imperialism.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Douglas:** It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that this is a time for members in all parties to make two things perfectly clear. The first is that we believe in a strong, united and viable Canada; that we want people of all races and tongues to work together to make this a great sovereign power in which we can provide a good life for our own people, and through which we can play an increasingly important role in the community of nations.

I think the second thing we want to make clear is that we recognize that in Canada there are two linguistic and cultural communities, and that those of us who belong to the English speaking part of Canada are desirous of seeing the legitimate aspirations of the French speaking community fully realized.

To that end we have problems we must resolve; but we will resolve them in our own way and by our own methods.

[Mr. Douglas.]

• (3:00 p.m.)

I hope that we will try very quickly to resolve these problems. The longer we delay, the greater opportunity we provide for others to fish in troubled waters. This is the reason we in this party have been pressing for the setting up of a parliamentary committee to discuss the constitution. We are convinced there is a greater consensus among the members of this house than might at first appear to be the case. We believe that the quicker we grapple with this problem the sooner it will be resolved, and the sooner it is resolved the greater will be the opportunity to build a strong and united Canada.

[Translation.]

**Mr. Réal Caouette (Villeneuve):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Ralliement Crétitiste and my colleagues, I am happy to endorse the statement of the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson), and I am doing so as a French Canadian from the province of Quebec.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Caouette:** When the Prime Minister says: "Canadian policy will be determined by Canadians" and "French-speaking Canadians have the ability to find their own place in confederation without stepping on others", that is true, and will become even more so since the French fact is being recognized throughout Canada as never before in the past.

Everyone admits that we have lived through squabbles since 1867. But, Mr. Speaker, under the British North America Act, one thing has nevertheless been granted to all Canadian provinces and, particularly, to the province of Quebec, and I am referring, for instance, to rights in matters of education, where the federal government has never intruded and where the provincial government had all the necessary powers in matters of highways, health, agriculture and natural resources development. In fact, if the province of Quebec decided to develop one source of wealth rather than another, neither Alberta, Ontario nor British Columbia would be entitled to intrude in the problems of the province of Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, when General de Gaulle states that Quebec will obtain its sovereignty, I say that the province of Quebec has had more sovereignty within the Canadian confederation than any country connected with France has ever obtained since France exists.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.