

*The Constitution*

structure and of sharing. The great advantage that Canadians have always had has been to be heirs to a country which might be too vast for certain minds. The problem of this country is that some people find it hard to understand the concepts of time and space. When we look at what is going on around us, at all the wars, the famines and the dictatorships, and when we compare this with the country we call Canada, it is very easy to see that we are like spoilt children who find it hard to be generous and to share even though their stomachs are full.

And what intensifies even more so this conflict are our personality clashes. This is what is eroding the national fiber of this country. We are incapable of appreciating this great heritage of ours and through the structures of society reach the people to whom we are answerable. This whole set up of school, municipal, provincial and federal structures is here to be of assistance to the private citizens and not the opposite.

This is what we must understand and this is what people outside these walls must understand. There is no intention of taking things and rights away from anybody. The idea is to give people more of the same. The member for Manicouagan, the Prime Minister of Canada or the Premier of Quebec or of any other province or any member of Parliament for that matter are only transitory figures but the country as a whole will remain and generations will succeed one another. What we must always have present in our mind is what we are going to leave behind for future generations and in which spirit we are going to transmit that heritage. The proposed resolution is drafted in that kind of spirit, namely the granting of cultural guarantees. I am referring to language rights but also to mobility rights and the mobility rights contained in this proposed resolution are a thing I am experiencing in my own riding.

● (1510)

Here is an example to illustrate how this happens. Over the past few years the economic centre of our country has been shifting westward. Contractors in my region, the type of people whom we might call the builders of our country, go to Edmonton to do business there. Quite often these people do not speak English very well. Nevertheless they are ready to take up the challenge and to follow the trends of the economy. The very principle of the resolution recognizes freedom of movement for citizens and capital from one part of the country to the other. And this is a fact. Ask any Canada employment centre how many people knock on the door to inquire about mobility plans to go west and how many westerners seek to go east. By this resolution, we enshrine this reality. Is anyone in this House opposed to such proposal? Is any province against such proposal? And yet we have heard premiers say: Listen, this is going to confuse our mobility plans. Mobility programs for citizens of our country are not designed to meet the needs of manpower plans, but to enable people to work where they want to.

Manpower plans can be adapted to the population. That is what we must confirm in this resolution. French-speaking families moving westward would then be able to get certain French-speaking institutions, if numbers warrant, and that matter would not be left for the federal or provincial governments but for the courts to decide. They would be able to rule in these matters on the basis of jurisprudence and after examining the facts.

I think there are very few cases of such generous projects in the history of Canada and what is most astonishing is the fact that those who oppose it do so simply on the basis of the methods and means used to implement it. Such an approach is risky for those who are unable to overcome their own opposition and deal strictly with the principle. That is I think the saddest aspect I see in the negative criticism made about supporting this resolution.

In closing my remarks, I would simply say that the great principle of liberalism, which I think everybody in this House would defend, puts the priority on the individual and not on the structures or on the state and I would challenge anybody in the House to find a formula within the proposed resolution that is contrary to what I have just said. Everything in that proposed resolution is addressed directly to the citizens and not the institutions, and that is what confirms the supremacy of the rights of the citizens over those of the state. That is what is important. In a world that is overmechanized, overbureaucratized, it was high time such principles were stated; it may also be high time to switch to action in order to achieve concrete objectives: that is why we are elected.

Go out in the street and ask the people what they think of this protracted debate. They will tell you, over and over again: You were elected to do that work; you are paid to solve those problems. Quit calling on us as witness and act. But act according to our freedoms and in terms of the generation to come. That is what we ask of you. Stop going over the same things time and time again and assume your responsibilities. That is the stand we must take, that is what we must act upon, instead of going around in circles and hiding behind false principles and sophistry to justify our inertia. There is only one thing to do: we must break out of the deadlock, go further and assert that we are a free country, capable of bringing back home what belongs to us, and mature enough to include in our constitution commitments that require surpassing ourselves. I ask them to be understanding. I ask them to consider from the north to the south and from the east to the west this large continent which we have inherited and to think that the discussions which are going on are perhaps the mere last effort which will enable us finally to obtain our basic rights as Canadian citizens, that the forthcoming years are merely a gleam of the future and that we will be able to gain control and to carry on the harmonious development of this country. I am convinced that if our fathers had been timid rather than confident, today our standard of living would not be so high