

*The Address—Mr. Chrétien*

particularly happy to see in the speech from the throne that the Prime Minister, who has always loved and trusted young people, intends to submit to parliament a program designed to fill the vacuum in this field.

Would it not be marvellous if very shortly French and English young men and women who wish to devote a few years of their lives to check poverty, disease and illiteracy, could together, here and abroad, undertake this task, while getting to know one another better? What an asset it would be for our country to see hundreds of members of the future elite spend a few years working toward a common goal and learn to know one another better.

Now, Mr. Speaker, will Canada survive as a country? Will we be able, in the years to come, to establish in Canada a way of life where the two founding language groups of our country will work in harmony toward the establishment of an exceptional society? Being interviewed by the writer Terence Robertson, the Prime Minister stated: "Canada is a federation in which the two founding language groups must be partners. It is only by admitting this fact that Canada will be able to remain united". The Quebecers are eager to stay within the Canadian confederation. The French fact was established on the shores of the St. Lawrence more than 430 years ago. Until now we have encountered very serious difficulties, but we have made it clear that we are on the American soil to stay and that we shall stay and shall keep on speaking French. We fought too hard a battle to retreat now. There is not a single French Canadian who would disown his past. The last two centuries have been particularly difficult, but now, in 1965, French Canada has regained confidence and would like its partner, English Canada, to recognize its existence and its strength.

It is not because the province of Quebec is now going through a sort of quiet revolution that English speaking Canada should be concerned. On the contrary, they should be delighted about that and try to understand what is going on in the St. Lawrence valley. Those who have been observing the economic, social and political development in the province of Quebec during the last five years have often said that the province is making a tremendous effort to keep abreast of the twentieth century. There is a great deal of truth in that. Most Quebecers are fully aware of being involved in a genuine and enormous social movement to make up for lost time, make good past mistakes and adapt

to the progress which we rejected or ignored for too long.

However, Quebec is not only striving to achieve the average standard of living in Canada. It is striving today to establish itself in the van of social progress throughout the world—it wants to show the way to modern and progressive societies.

To us French Canadians, there is a double challenge involved in such a desire. First, to establish beyond any question the vitality and boldness of the French reality in North America and our capacity to make a positive and unique contribution to Canadian life, to the development of the whole Canada and, second, to justify through our ability and work our claims for a full participation in all major activities in Canada—government, business, arts, science, professions, and that in view to strengthen and make more dynamic the Canadian nation.

In that sense we are trying to make a place for ourselves within confederation. We realize that for too many years we did not play any part in many aspects of our Canadian life—a part which it was our responsibility and our right to play—but for various and complex reasons including surrender on our part of some of our responsibilities and a certain measure of resistance on the part of English speaking Canada.

From now on, things will change. Today we intend to become an equal and responsible partner in this common enterprise. As a matter of fact, a full partnership is the only sound alternative to separation. Only when we are full-fledged members of the Canadian family with all the rights and responsibilities that follow shall we feel really at home in Canada. Only when we have invested our normal share in Canadian life and take upon ourselves the rights and privileges, shall we consider ourselves the true partners in confederation.

With his broad-mindedness and his sense of history the present Prime Minister has recognized, as no one had done before, that Canada will only survive provided that the two founding ethnic groups can live as truly equal partners. History will do him justice in this regard, while French Canadians will be deeply grateful to him.

• (4:50 p.m.)

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You can well imagine, Mr. Speaker, that this atmosphere of building a new society in Quebec is tremendously exciting and challenging. It makes Quebec the most