

*Official Languages*

Constitutional prerogatives accorded in 1867 to a people at that time domiciled in Quebec, if they are to be extended across Canada, can be accorded to the same people. I fail to see how extra-territorial privileges can be accorded to a province involving cultural matters in any other province. This would make of Canada a babble of confusion. It would result in a cultural balkanization which would destroy national unity.

As Professor Rudnykyj has pointed out, there is agreement or at least no opposition among ethnic groups to according recognition to French language and culture from coast to coast; not as any special recognition to a province, but as simple justice to 6 million Canadians who in 1867 were given certain guarantees applying to the situation as it then existed. These were guarantees extended to French Canada. The right to the French language in parliament, for example, was not restricted to French speaking members from Quebec but applied to French speaking members anywhere in Canada. Today, there are a number of French speaking members of parliament from various parts of Canada. The partner races of Confederation were English and French, and English is recognized from coast to coast. There is no ethnic objection to the same recognition being accorded to the French language.

Now, what of the ethnic cultures? Can we have in this nation a multi-racial, multi-cultural society with a bi-cultural constitution? I think we can. I think it is a noble experiment worth trying, and one that may lead to success at a time when to all intents the American society is foundering on the rock of racial prejudice. We must at all costs in Canada avoid the destructive, disastrous land mine of racial prejudice. Let us not in our deliberations embrace a narrow, restrictive, biased, partisan and personal approach. Let not our approach be one of shutting out others, but of opening a door to all those who wish to contribute.

I maintain our country is enriched by the beautiful and noble culture of the first Canadians: by the gaiety and passion of French Canada; by the measured dignity of the Anglo-Saxon; by the stern efficiency of the Tunic races with their poetic imaginations; by the vivid tones of the Celts and the moving processional of 1,000 years of the Slavic people, along with the brilliant, colourful zest of the Italian community; the grandeur and pathos of the Jewish pilgrimage and the beauty and age old mystery of Asia. Are we to shut out of our calculations any of

these world-wide and age old races, cultures, peoples and civilizations? Where shall we start? Where shall we stop?

• (4:00 p.m.)

While recognizing the constitutional undertaking of 1867 and the necessity of extending it to cover the present, is it not more reasonable, more positive and more beneficial as far as all Canadians are concerned to extend the umbrella of recognition to cover our other cultures? I am not, of course, suggesting the constitutional underlining or emphasis of cultures other than English or French. Certainly, the first step in ensuring the progress of this nation is to resolve the question of English and French relationships, but no one should feel this will be the end of all the problems.

Is there any reason why there should not be at the federal level recognition of the validity of our native Indian and Eskimo cultures? Such recognition already exists in a limited way through Indian schools and support of Eskimo art. This is not enough. Those cultures which embrace a sizeable proportion of our population should achieve special federal recognition through a department of Canadian culture having as its function and prerogative the recognition, extension and support of the various cultures which make up the charm, colour and vitality of this nation. This would not require particular constitutional changes at the moment. It could be achieved in a tangible way through an extension of the citizenship activities of the Department of the Secretary of State, which would preserve for Canada the enriching and ennobling aspects of the many forms and varieties of Canadian life and make this country unique among the nations of the world.

I am not suggesting the preservation and support of a particular culture for any reason other than that it is Canadian. When you have half a million or a million or more Canadians caught up in a particular cultural stream, it is a fact worth recognizing. This would apply to the culture of native Canada, French Canada and the many cultures that have been brought to this country and have since made their contribution here. I include the Germanic, Slavic and Italian cultures because their representatives are numerous.

I do not think Canada can in any way suffer by a sympathetic recognition of and creative approach to the many cultures which good fortune has brought to our shores. This