

provinces would, on the whole, be the same right across Canada. I submit that failure to act in this way will result in a patchwork of standards across Canada. It will create second-class citizens in some regions. I find myself obliged to ask the government whether this is the best they can offer the Canadian people. In particular, I ask whether this is the best they can offer the people of Quebec whom we are seeking to persuade to stay in Canada because we support each other and co-operate to provide fair and equal standards across the country.

One of the questions which every member of parliament ought to ask, and one which I hope the people of Canada will ask themselves, is this: why do we wish to retain a federal system? We are not likely to keep Canada together by rhetoric and sentiment. There must be a *raison d'être* for staying in the Canadian family. Like all members, I have emotional ties with this country. All of us have warm recollections of various regions of Canada, its environment, its scenery, its people. All of us are challenged by the possibility of building in Canada a society which is different, a country whose tolerance and diversity make it outstanding. But I base my belief in the need to retain a federal system in this country on three things. First, I believe that only a united Canada can give us true national independence. I am an independent. I believe in independence, not Quebec independence but Canadian independence. And we have not got it. No country is independent when two-thirds of its economy is owned outside its borders. No country in the world today finds more of its resources held by foreign corporations than has Canada. We shall not achieve independence by breaking this country into fragments. There is a much better hope that Canada can be independent by staying together than by breaking up. One of the first areas to be absorbed would be the province of Quebec where they would lose what has been theirs ever since 1760—the right to their language, their culture and their legal system.

● (1620)

I believe that economic progress is more likely if we have a national government with the constitutional powers necessary to promote economic growth and full employment. You cannot appeal to people in Quebec in connection with the benefits of federalism as long as there is 13 per cent unemployment in that province; they are not going to believe you. The Premier of Quebec says he wants to establish a customs union and common market. I want to point out we already have that in Canada. In the northern half of this continent we have a great free trade area in which goods, people and capital move freely back and forth. When the Premier of Quebec says he wants to have a customs union that is something similar to the European Economic Community, I think he should be reminded that the European Economic Community is moving eventually toward political union, not away from it, and that to take any part of Canada out of confederation is to move against the stream of history. It should be remembered that there is little value in pulling out of Canada if it means we are going to have something which is not as good as we have at the present time.

I believe the people of Quebec as well as the people in the rest of Canada will understand that if we have a national

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government which applies itself to the economic growth of this country, to solving the problems of unemployment and the disparity between the different regions of Canada, then we are giving Quebec an inducement to stay in confederation.

Finally, I believe in a federal system, because by co-operating together we can attain national standards of health, welfare and education which guarantee all Canadians the basic rights of human well-being no matter in what region they may reside.

My quarrel with the legislation now before us is that it fails to provide equality of opportunity at a time when we need to be demonstrating the worth of Canadian federalism. This legislation is a retrogressive measure which undoes the work which was done by people like the right hon. W. L. Mackenzie King, the right hon. Louis St. Laurent, the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker), and the right hon. Lester B. Pearson.

Mr. Parent: And Trudeau.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): My hon. friend says, "And Trudeau". I will come to the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) in a moment, if he wants me to. I had the privilege of sitting in federal-provincial conferences with Mr. King, Mr. St. Laurent and the right hon. member for Prince Albert, and I sat across the House when Mr. Pearson was prime minister of this country. One of the things that characterizes these four ex-prime ministers of Canada is that they were convinced that if we were going to hold this country together we had to maintain certain national standards so that all Canadians, no matter whether they live, on the Pacific coast, the Atlantic coast, the north or the south, no matter what their language, creed or racial origin, will get fair and equal treatment and that there will be no second-class or third-class citizens in this country. My hon. friend across the way wants me to add the Prime Minister to my quartet. He is heading a government which right now is moving to destroy these national standards.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): This is a government which is moving backwards to create disparity between provinces, which can only result in resentment and hostility; and if it is carried far enough it could lead to the dismemberment of this country.

Mr. Parent: What you are saying is not worthy of you. You should know better than that.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Just read Bill C-37.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. The hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas) has the floor.