

The Address—Mr. Collette

On May 22, a couple of days after the referendum in Quebec, I had the benefit of putting my particular message in the context of the result of May 20, which members on both sides of the House applauded and which has spurred on the whole question of constitutional change throughout the country. I again implored the provinces to try to facilitate some entrenchment of minority and language rights in the constitution. I wanted to continue then, before my time elapsed, on the whole question of constitutional change from the perspective of a member of Parliament from Ontario.

I think that members of Parliament from Ontario, notwithstanding their party, and members of the legislature of Ontario have a particular role to play in the constitutional debate which is before the country. There have been comments thrown back and forth in this House about the attitude of Ontario vis-à-vis the sharing of benefits and wealth in this country. I would like to call it one o'clock in a couple of minutes and come back after the break to talk about sacrifices—perhaps that is a strong word—or the accommodations which must be made by Ontario, the richest, province in this country, to ensure that there is equality of benefits, revenue sharing and opportunity throughout this country.

The Atlantic region and the western region have historic grievances against Ontario and confederation as it has developed, and I am in sympathy with those arguments. I would like to talk about this subject after the break in the context of the negotiations which the Prime Minister is about to undertake with the Premier of Alberta on the setting of an oil price. If I could have agreement, I would call it one o'clock.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please. As it happens, it is one o'clock. We will recognize the parliamentary secretary when the House returns at two o'clock.

It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock this afternoon.

At one o'clock the House took recess.

● (1400)

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order. When the House rose at one o'clock, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Collette) had the floor.

Mr. Collette: As I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, this is a somewhat truncated speech and I shall try to finish with some dispatch.

Before the lunch break I talked about the constitutional debate in the context of the division of powers, especially as it affects Ontario. I think it is crucial that members of Parliament from Ontario and members of the legislature of Ontario enter into the constitutional debate that is now going on, especially in view of the negotiations that the Prime Minister

will be having with Premier Lougheed in a couple of weeks' time.

My point is that the discussions now under way on the whole question of oil prices could have serious effects on the future of this country. I hope that the rhetoric on both sides of the argument—for the producing provinces in western Canada and for the consuming provinces, such as Ontario—could be in language a little less inflammatory than that which has been used. It is not for me to stand in my place and admonish any member of this chamber, but those of us who view the issue with some alarm and those of us who inflame passions in this House are doing a disservice to the country. I hope that over the next few weeks when Parliament will perhaps not be sitting we will cool our rhetoric somewhat.

Before lunchtime I talked about the way Ontario has benefited from confederation. We can look back 100 years and realize that in 1867 the maritime provinces were somewhat wealthier than they are today, given the proportion of the GNP at the time. The people from Atlantic Canada can argue that they have suffered over the years and that only with equalization has a measure of parity been achieved in the country. I am not arguing against equalization; it is one of the great concepts that we have in Canada today. I think people in Atlantic Canada, however, would argue for the need for development of their own potential and also that the freight rate structure in the country has hampered the development of industry in eastern Canada. The same arguments, of course, are made in this House by members from western Canada.

Those of us who come from Ontario must realize that if this country is to continue, that if there is to be a common market, as the Prime Minister describes it, where there is free movement of labour, goods and people across provincial boundaries, then concessions have to be made by all provinces and particularly by Ontario.

When the Prime Minister meets with Premier Lougheed in a couple of weeks' time I hope that he will not just be discussing the oil price in its narrow context but will talk about other concessions that will be made by central Canada to western Canada. I hope there will be recognition of the fact that, after oil and gas is taken from the ground, an industrial base must be established in order to create the wealth needed by western Canadians. I think this is what Mr. Lougheed wants but I believe we have to strip away the inflammatory language on both sides and agree on the basic thrust that economic growth in this country is moving west. That is not a bad thing, Mr. Speaker.

At the weekend, Mr. Speaker, I was reading the *Toronto Star*. That is the bible for those of us who come from Toronto.

An hon. Member: The Liberal members.

Mr. Collette: The inside section of the *Toronto Star* dealt with the problems in Ontario's mines, farms and forests. It referred to their vanishing. The point made was that through mismanagement by the provincial government, farm land was being lost, resources were being destroyed—

An hon. Member: By the Conservatives.