

[English]

On this twenty-fifth anniversary of the "by and by" commission, I can remember the time we asked when this commission was going to report. It was a little bit of a joke, because royal commissions takes a long time. They said "by and by it would report". It was not a joking matter because it was a very serious and very important commission.

As hon. members before me have said, we have cause for both satisfaction and concern. We have more bilingual people than ever before. Recent Statistics Canada reports state that the increase has been from 13.5 per cent in 1971 to 16.2 per cent today, so we are going forward and not backward.

This reflects in large measure the desire of young people in this country, and I emphasize young people, to learn either English or French as the case may be. The young people of Canada are demonstrating their support for a bilingual country every day in classrooms, through exchanges and through travel. It is this reality we must consider when we hear noisy demonstrations, as we have recently, of intolerance toward official language minorities in Canada. Look at the pictures on the TV screens. Those are old faces that show intolerance. The young people are not showing the level of intolerance. They have a different view of Canada and that is the view that was reflected in the reports of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism.

There has been a lot of talk, and more than talk, of distinct societies in Canada. The Meech Lake constitutional accord recognizes Quebec as a distinct society which is a position supported by my party, the NDP. However, in my view, the accord also creates another nine distinct societies. It seems to me that one of the reasons we have been bogged down recently in constitutional change is that that view of Canada is in conflict with the view of Andre Laurendeau and Davidson Dunton in the report of the B and B Commission 25 years ago. In all this discussion of distinct societies, we must not forget that one of the major elements of Canada's distinctiveness as a country is that it is bilingual. We all, I believe, can agree to that. Compare this to California where there are moves to make it a unilingual state. We have a different view in Canada. We have a view that Canada is bilingual and that is a result, by and

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large, of the royal commission 25 years ago. We are not a melting pot.

For us to remain distinctive, we must continue to pursue national policies that, to the extent possible, give Canadians the chance to live, to learn and to work in either official language. Those of us who support the vision of the Bilingual and Biculturalism Commission must speak out—all of us—more forcefully than ever before for tolerance in this country.

• (1130)

I want to conclude with two quotes, one from Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the other from his rival, Henri Bourassa. Laurier said in 1897, on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee: "If there is anything to which I have devoted my political life, it is to try to promote unity, harmony and amity between the diverse elements of this country. My friends can desert me. They can remove their confidence from me. They can withdraw the trust they have placed in my hands, but never shall I deviate from that line of policy".

Laurier's concept of Canada was to have a tolerant society but not necessarily enforced by law.

I want to end by quoting from the real father of the B and B Commission and the bilingualism nature of Canada, Quebec nationalist Henri Bourassa. I quote from page 78 of Tom Berger's book *'Fragile Freedoms'*. He was a former judge from British Columbia who wrote:

Bourassa went on to describe his vision of a bilingual, bicultural Canada, an Anglo-French nation from sea to sea.

We deserve better than to be considered like the savages of the old reservations and to be told: "Remain in Quebec, continue to stagnate in ignorance, you are at home there; but elsewhere you must become English."

No, we have the right to be French in language; we have the right to be Catholics in faith; we have the right to be free by the constitution—and to enjoy these rights throughout the whole expanse of Confederation.

In our own day, Pierre Trudeau has adopted Bourassa's idea of a bilingual and bicultural Canada. Trudeau is Bourassa's heir, not Laurier's. The Official Languages Act of 1969 enlarged the availability of services in English and French in federal departments and institutions, pursuant to Section 133 of the BNA Act.

A further expansion of the scope of those two official languages is now taking place under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I will conclude with the guarantee of English and French education throughout the country