

*The Constitution*

**Mr. La Salle:**—will understand, Mr. Speaker, what I felt in the slogan which was launched by the Prime Minister, since it was nothing but a slogan. I had the opportunity to say that I did not want to take a position publicly during the referendum when I recognized that I voted against Mr. Lévesque's proposal but that I could not defend the slogan presented by Mr. Trudeau to Quebeckers because I already felt the perfidy and the hypocrisy in his renewed federalism. And I was right. And I shall read later what Mr. Ryan said. He too regrets to have been taken in by the proposal made by the Prime Minister of Canada and by his accomplices, his sheep, who followed him without protesting. What dissatisfaction among the partisans of the No-side today!

**An hon. Member:** And your people in Joliette?

**Mr. La Salle:** What dissatisfaction among the partisans of the No-side. Do not concern yourself with the people in Joliette.

Of the deterioration of the political ideology and the absolute lack of principles within the Liberal party which were denounced in 1963 by the present Prime Minister and described by him as the "raddled face of power", we have had a clear illustration these past few days.

I am coming now to the constitutional apostasy of the Minister of Transport, which has demonstrated the slavish partisanship which the present leader of the Liberal party denounced 17 years ago. The fact that to keep his position within the cabinet the Minister of Transport has deemed it advisable to repudiate now the spirit and the letter of the Pepin-Robarts report is certainly one of the most despicable events in Canadian history. When we consider this decision by one of the co-chairmen of the Task Force on Canadian Unity to repudiate so lightly his own report, we feel both sad and angry because there is not a single person on the Liberal side who can still grow incensed at the unspeakable machination masterminded by the leader of the party.

The man who once proclaimed the sovereignty of both the federal and provincial governments over their respective areas of jurisdiction—I am still referring to the Minister of Transport—who claimed that an equilibrium and a consensus between the two levels of government were necessary for the survival of Canada, has come to adhere to the thesis that the provinces are only the subordinates of the central government.

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"The thesis of the Prime Minister on the paramountcy of the federal government can be established and easily defended" the Minister of Transport dares tell us now, thereby rejecting the judgement he himself had passed as co-chairman of the royal commission. Canadian history is not devoid of vile actions but I do not know of a great many that are more degrading than that one, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the pure and simple violation of provincial jurisdiction in the field

of education under the pretence of entrenching language rights in the constitution. The Minister of Transport subscribes to this view with an eagerness that his fellow members of the Pepin-Robarts commission will have no ground for being proud of. The pseudo intellectual gimmicks of the minister will not fool anyone. The minister has kept his power but he has forsaken honour. His credibility has been reduced to nothing, but his servile attitude will probably not carry him very far in the realm of politics. I suspect that the minister will eventually experience the fate his leader had in store for John Turner, for instance, precisely the man who represented his riding of Ottawa-Carleton. Yet, unlike John Turner, he will not find anybody to regret his departure except those who will feel pity and shame for him.

And I turn again to the Prime Minister, to the man who, the day after the Victoria conference, stated that he no longer wanted to hear about the constitution and that it was more urgent to find some remedy to the mounting economic problems that Canada faced. This same man is today making an impassionate plea for patriation, which everyone wants, no doubt, but which no one finds so pressing as to have priority over the other ills of our Canadian society.

That is another strategy of this government, to bring Canadians to discuss constitutional amendments in order to hide the real problems while Parliament and Canadians have no budget and while there is a pressing and vital need for economic direction. During the next two months the Prime Minister will try to make the media concentrate on constitutional reform because he is ashamed and does not have the courage to table his economic proposals but especially because he has none that would please Canadians. This is the kind of strategy which will not fool Canadians as far as this government's attitudes are concerned, and everybody subscribed to them. The constitution will not put bread and butter on the tables of the unemployed this winter.

**An hon. Member:** It is about time you started to think about it.

**Mr. La Salle:** That is not scandalous. It is high time the hon. member thought about it. A government member criticized us for having waited seven months before presenting a budget, and the Liberals have now been waiting for nine months. I forgive them, Mr. Speaker, because they do not know any better.

Here again we are witnessing well known Liberal tactics, that of twisting facts and misrepresentation. All those who followed the progress of the referendum campaign in the country, whether they belonged to the Yes or the No committee, know that the May 20 vote was about one precise question: the mandate of the Lévesque government to propose a system of political sovereignty coupled with economic association with the rest of Canada. The question never dealt with any other project. Quebeckers said no to sovereignty, because