

Interim Supply

now to deepen and strengthen the reality and the hopes of confederation so that all Canadians, without regard to race or language or cultural backgrounds, may feel with confidence that within this nation they can realize, without discrimination and in full partnership, a good destiny for themselves and for those who follow them. In that spirit of hope and confidence we can all work together and build up a greater and more united Canada.

(Translation):

Mr. Sevigny: Mr. Chairman, we have heard two remarkable speeches this afternoon. The first one by the hon. member for Lapointe (Mr. Gregoire), and the second one by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Pearson).

Of course, I am in agreement with the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition when he says that it is essential to have a better understanding between the two great racial groups forming this country.

It is quite obvious that our country will reach the full scope of its magnificent destiny when the two great racial groups in this country will live in a climate of mutual understanding and full co-operation.

This good understanding is now facing obstacles, the first of which being, it seems, a mistaken view of the educational system in the province of Quebec. As a result some people in the other provinces and even in our own province think that the graduates of our secondary schools and of our universities are not qualified to occupy important positions in nearly all spheres of Canadian activity.

It is unfortunate that such publicity should be made at this time about certain incidents and statements involving businessmen or company heads who, perhaps in order to excuse their regrettable omissions, try to put the blame on a lack of education in order to excuse the faults of their own administration.

Mr. Chairman, as several members of this house, I am a graduate of our secondary schools, and I have studied a few years in our universities. I have had the opportunity of talking with graduates of secondary institutions or university establishments of other provinces, and I have been in a position to realize that the graduates of Laval or Montreal universities, of the Quebec school of commerce, of the Montreal school of higher commercial studies, of Polytechnique, and of our other schools, are as qualified as graduates of any other similar school or university in Canada to occupy commanding positions in any sphere of activity.

[Mr. Pearson.]

That is why I do not hesitate to say that if, in private industry or elsewhere, French Canadians could not be found to fill important posts, it is mainly due to the fact that no effort has been made to find competent people where they could be found.

The other day I made the following suggestion: let the heads of big corporations carefully examine the list of graduates of our secondary and university establishments for the last ten years, let them pick the first ten in each year, and they will have immediately a reserve of qualified men among whom they will be able to select the French Canadians they need, not only in order to give French Canada its fair share, but in order to improve the quality of their own concerns.

Mr. Chairman, our English speaking fellow citizens have their own faults too, just as we have ours in French Canada. Those faults must be eliminated. Any act done on the spur of spontaneous anger which deeply hurts not only our English speaking fellow citizens but also our French speaking ones constitutes a stumbling block which may destroy the hopes of those who see in the existence of harmony and unity between both races the solution to the main problems of the country.

I condemn those who allowed the war memorial in Ottawa to be desecrated. I also condemn those who were responsible for the taking-down of the red ensign on Place Ville-Marie or who allowed this thing to happen.

I long with all my heart for the day when, united at last, all Canadians will rally behind one clearly distinctive flag which every patriotic Canadian will salute as the emblem of national unity.

It is precisely with that purpose in mind that the Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker) announced recently that early next year the government would call a conference of provincial and federal statesmen to promote the adoption of a symbol around which all Canadians will rally and which will permanently identify our Canadian sovereignty.

Mr. Chairman, a while ago, I was asking our English speaking fellow citizens to show better understanding and to make a better study of the undeniable qualifications of our university graduates, but I think it is also necessary to ask the children of French Canada to realize that too stormy public protestations are not likely to bring our fellow citizens in other provinces to understand that we must go ahead in a conciliatory spirit.

I approved most of the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Pearson), but I regretted a statement that we hear all too often at the present time in every speech of