

National Unity

Mr. Speaker, I stand here proudly. I defy anyone to require me to dedicate myself anew to the unity of Canada. I have been working for the unity of Canada all my life.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Surely there is somebody on that side of the House with enough command of the English language to produce something meaningful for us to debate. In the middle of the remarks made by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) yesterday he had the effrontery to come up with the notion that what we need at this stage is a task force. That is what required us to call for a proper forum in which these matters could be discussed. There has been a down-playing of this parliamentary forum as the proper place in which these matters should be discussed.

I would draw to your attention, Mr. Speaker, that Australia is facing this same problem. Their constitution is not working well and they have established an Australian constitutional convention. An article published in "The Parliamentarian" in April this year, written by the Attorney General of the Commonwealth of Australia, sums up the purposes of the convention. The last paragraph reads:

The solutions to basic constitutional problems must be political solutions acceptable to the people at large and the open discussion of constitutional issues by politicians from all the major political parties and representing all the regions of the country should contribute much to the removal of difficulties which have bedevilled constitutional reform and Commonwealth state relations in the past.

Just by changing a few expressions in that paragraph we have the justification for the commission recommended in the amendment to this resolution.

I should like to make some more comments but I am not going to stand in the way of others who wish to speak. I urge the government to reconsider its notion of a task force, and to assign to those to whom it belongs the problem of looking into the matters which have brought us to our sorry state—matters

which have caused bitterness in many minds because of the confrontations the government has brought forward. I cede the floor, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gus MacFarlane (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, usually it is a great honour and privilege to join in any debate in this House, but at this moment in the history of our country it is very important to say something in a positive way about the unity of the country. I am not going to try to assert any particular reason or right that I might have.

Born of Scottish parents who emigrated to this country, to live in Verdun, Quebec, I, with my family, associated with one of the great founding races of this country. Mr. Speaker, my parents chose to live here; they were not born in this country, although I was fortunate enough to be born here. My parents, of Scottish heritage, decided they wanted to live in this country and bring up their family here. In those early days I remember hardly any discussions, in that province or city, concerning the division of the country, although there was bigotry and unfairness. But it was not directed just at the French or English; it was directed at the Jew, at the so-called hunky, at the black, and at others. I grew up at a time when such bigotry and unfairness were rampant.

Because of my experiences and because of my background, I am not willing to listen to those who say that our different cultures, the cultures of the English and French, our two great founding races, and the cultures of other ethnic groups, are divisive. I am not willing to admit that the acceptance of such diversity of cultures brings about divisiveness in Canadians.

May I call it seven o'clock, Mr. Speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. It being seven o'clock p.m., pursuant to orders made on Thursday, June 30 and Tuesday, July 5, 1977, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at eleven o'clock.

At 7 p.m. the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Special Order.