

*The Address—Mr. Macquarrie*

suggest a separation of the vice-regal office from the government process? I hope not.

I am not what one would describe as an emotional monarchist. I do not get emotional about the concept of monarchy. But I am a rational monarchist, because I think this is the system that works best in our particular type of society. If there are those in this country who believe that some other system is better, and down through the years there have been those, let them say so. Let us look at the issue. I do not quite agree with my colleague, the hon. member for Queens (Mr. MacLean), that if Canada became a republic I would go somewhere else. Probably I would rather be in a republican Canada than somewhere else. But I should like to know if we are moving in that direction, and I want to have a chance to say that I think a monarchy is better. I want this whole thing freely and openly discussed. I do not want to be subjected to subtleties, subtleties and still more subtleties which move us toward a lack of appreciation for the monarchial system, because I think it is one of the things that makes Canada unique among the North American nations, and one of the things that makes our system as good as it is in many, many ways.

There have been discussions about constitutional matters, and we heard a most excellent speech yesterday by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) on this very subject. Quite typically, not a word of that speech was reported in the press. It is appropriate that we discuss the constitution during this centennial year. We must, in any dynamic society, look at our governmental structure and constitutional framework to see wherein it needs change, and the compulsion to look is all the greater in a federal state.

We must study our constitutional apparatus, and the biggest part, but not the only part, is the B.N.A. Act. It has been said that this is not a very thrilling document, and many say it is inflexible and rigid and does not excite, like the United States constitution or like some of those great constitutions which some new republics have drawn up—and ignored. However, it has provided a valuable framework upon which, with great difficulty, has been constructed and retained, a splendid and varied political community whose hundredth birthday we are celebrating this year.

I confess to a little impatience sometimes with those who begin their constitutional discussions by suggesting that the B.N.A. Act be

thrown out. Some suggest that we should have a Canadian document: Let us have something that is made in Canada, they say. The B.N.A. Act is a Canadian document. By geography it may have been completed in the United Kingdom but its inspiration came from Canadians. Sir John A. Macdonald said that 90 per cent of it was decided in Charlottetown. It was made by Canadians for Canadians and it is a worthy document. Let it be changed. Perhaps after open discussion it may be totally amended. But let us not look upon it as a kind of strait-jacket in which we cannot flourish. Indeed it has been changed many times. My maritime forebears made many changes in the subsidy provisions, and we should make a lot more or we are going to be in a bit of trouble.

I think we are not facing up to the importance of our constitutional problems. It would be a most unfortunate thing if in this centennial year our euphoria led us to believe that everything was fine and that all our problems were in the past. I think we would celebrate our confederation more realistically if we recognized our problems, that they exist, and that there are difficulties and jurisdictional problems of great magnitude.

We must begin our second century with a firm determination to deal with some of these constitutional problems and, as many of my colleagues in this house have said time and time again, we must have greater federal leadership in this field. Months have passed since the Fulton-Favreau formula was torpedoed. While I was never so fearful of that as some people were, I was most distressed that nothing was suggested in its place. Month after month we have asked what is being done, and month after month Canadians have looked for federal initiative. We all know what happened. It was left, incredibly, for a provincial premier and for the opposition in this house to take the initiative in this matter. Premier Robarts called for a Confederation of Tomorrow Conference and his call was treated with pained petulance by the Prime Minister of this country.

● (5:50 p.m.)

Now, finally, we hear that some gesture is to be made on July 5 at a time when the premiers are being sworn in as members of the privy council. We learn there will then be a brief discussion of some of these matters. Surely there is no connection between the privy council oath and that day. Surely this is not an indication that the federal government