

Supply—Justice

assurance that their language and cultural rights will be recognized and respected, that they will not be treated as second class citizens because they speak French.

[*English*]

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Ryan goes on to point out that in addition to this it is necessary to deal with the problem of the constitutional position of Quebec within confederation. In this respect the contemptuous remarks by the minister in a press conference a few days later, or perhaps while he was still at the meeting of the Canadian Bar Association, directed to all those who saw a solution to some of these constitutional dilemmas in a particular status for Quebec, were not at all helpful. Once again I turn to an editorial of Mr. Claude Ryan on September 8 under the heading:

[*Translation*]

The deplorable attitude of Mr. Pierre-Elliott Trudeau.

[*English*]

I will read the last paragraph, although I am sure the minister has already read it and no doubt it has increased his humility to the proper extent, but I will read it again:

[*Translation*]

Basically, we blame Mr. Trudeau because he sets himself up as an outside judge, arrogant and unbending, when he should humbly, like everyone else, be seeking. What we deplore, in his case, is a hateful tendency to judge from on high and from afar, problems of which, if he were somewhat more humble, he might suspect that the understanding escapes him. Mr. Trudeau claims to serve the cause of Canadian unity by speaking as he does. We claim that he does a disservice by extreme language, to this cause which in our eyes remains worthy. He makes more difficult the task of those who seek, through actual moderation, effective solutions to very real problems which they have not invented but, which stem from history and life and are only aggravated by the blindness of some people whose first duty would be to realize it with seriousness and truth.

[*English*]

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Brewin: I commend those words to the minister. I hope he will forgive my pronunciation. It is not quite what it should be, but I hope it is improving.

I want now to say a word about this matter of particular status. Of course it is possible to give a definition of that so confined that it does not mean anything more than we have at the present time in the British North

[Mr. Brewin.]

America Act. It is perfectly possible, as some of the opponents of this idea have said, to give it such a broad and sweeping content that to talk of a federal system and to confer such a particular status on any one province would be absurd, and would destroy the whole federal system. Both these propositions are true. But I agree with the Minister of Manpower and Immigration when he said at the Montmorency conference in September—I do not agree with all he said; I simply agree with this—that the time had come for us to set aside slogans, to sit down and discuss concrete proposals. With that I entirely agree.

The device of a particular status is not regarded, by us at any rate, as a sort of concession made so as to please Quebec and denied to other provinces. It is merely a device whereby, if Quebec desires decentralization on certain matters that affect her language and culture, she may insist on that decentralization. But if the rest of Canada, the other nine provinces—and for very good reasons, I may say—want centralized administration of certain matters they, too, can insist on that without being held to the degree of decentralization that appears attractive to the province of Quebec. This is only a device; it is not a sacred formula or anything like that.

Our function is to discuss and work out what should be done. I say that the minister is doing a disservice—I am sure he does not mean it—when he waives a particular status aside and rules it out in a rather insulting way, as he did before. Perhaps he did not say what he was reported as having said; I do not know. I do not even understand the full significance of his words. They were translated from French. His words were translated as stupid but I understand that he used an even stronger adjective than that.

I want once again to appeal to the minister, and through him to the government, to bring these constitutional issues and the problems facing us to a committee of this parliament. I suggest that because I believe out of this parliament can be chosen, from all parties and all regions, a group of people who can sit down in good faith, intelligence and sense, consider some of these problems and perhaps arrive at the consensus which the Prime Minister said is so important to the unity of Canada.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Chairman, could I ask the hon. member a question?

Mr. Brewin: Yes.