

*Interim Supply*

Canadians. They look upon a federal-provincial conference as a meeting of Canadian leaders representing Canadian provinces and concerned with the problems of the Canadian people.

The purpose of such a conference should be to set national goals and, having done so, to co-operate in working for their attainment. This cannot be done by fragmenting Canada into semi-autonomous states, nor by reducing the powers of the federal government to the point where it has little to do except collect taxes and excise duties and run the post office. The New Democratic party believes Canada is more than the sum total of its parts. Economically we are an organic unit striving to achieve a Canadian identity and Canadian unity. I do not think the people of Canada want this country balkanized according to provincial boundaries or geographical locations.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Would the hon. gentleman permit me to ask a question? Is it not true that at the convention of his party they adopted the idea of the two nations?

**Mr. Douglas:** If the Secretary of State would possess himself in patience I will deal with that in a few moments. I have all the time in the world, if he has, so we could continue this debate indefinitely.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I regret already having asked that question.

**Mr. Douglas:** I was trying to expedite the matter, but I will certainly deal with this at greater length when I come to the question of the two nations.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I withdraw the question.

**Mr. Douglas:** The Secretary of State usually gets the estimates through in spite of himself. I was saying, when I was unnecessarily interrupted, that I did not think the Canadian people want to see this country balkanized according to provincial boundaries or geographical regions. They want their provincial governments to have the revenues necessary to discharge their constitutional responsibilities; but equally they want a federal government with legislative authority and fiscal capacity to promote economic growth, full employment and equality of opportunity for every Canadian irrespective of where he may live.

The whole trend of our times is toward greater economic co-operation among states, even among nations which have been bitter enemies for centuries and which in the past have gloried in their absolute national sovereignty. In the European economic community six nations are not only integrating their economies but are moving toward the free

movement of people across national boundaries and the establishment of uniform, portable social security benefits. It would be ironic indeed if at the very time when Europe is welding its economies into an efficient unit, we in Canada were to splinter this country into ten economically weak fragments.

If Canadians are to enjoy prosperity, full employment and adequate social security, our economy must continue to expand.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Would the hon. member permit a question?

**Mr. Douglas:** Perhaps it could be asked later.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Mr. Chairman—

**Mr. Douglas:** I said no. I have the floor. Would the hon. member sit down? I do not intend to be interrupted.

**Mr. Nielsen:** On a point of order—

**The Chairman:** The hon. member is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Would the hon. gentleman identify the document from which he is reading?

**Mr. Douglas:** That is not a point of order. I am reading from some notes on this subject. If that is the most profound observation the hon. member for Yukon can make on this serious subject I think he had better remain silent.

Our economy will only expand if we can compete in the markets of the world with such industrial giants as the United States, Great Britain, West Germany and Japan. We cannot meet this type of competition by a process of fragmentation. We can only grow if we are unified into a strong economic entity with a deep seated sense of national purpose and capable of making national decisions.

I am not urging more centralization, but I am pleading for a federal system in which there will be more co-operative planning at the federal and provincial levels directed toward objectives which are worthy of Canada. Demagogic appeals to local self-interest may be popular for a time, but I do not think they will commend themselves to the Canadian people as a whole. What will it profit this country if one or two areas prosper while others languish in economic decay? A chain is only as strong as its weakest link and confederation is only as strong as its weakest member. If Canada is to grow and prosper it must do so as a unit. Having poor relations may give one a feeling of superiority but it never leads to lasting friendship. If Canada is to go forward it must go forward as one people, with two languages—