

Official Languages

Canadians. It is a question of the kind of Canada we want to have, a Canada for Canadians, regardless of colour, race, origin, religion or social position.

[*Editor's note: And Mr. Paproski having spoken in Ukrainian and Polish:*]

I have enjoyed using these few expressions in Ukrainian and Polish, Mr. Speaker, but realize I must abide by the rules of this house.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to say a few words, in the house, about the Canadian identity.

The Canadian problem is not restricted to the constitution or to the history of our country.

There is also the problem of Canadians, that of the people itself, of all those who live across the country. First of all, the first inhabitants, the Indians and the Eskimos, and then, those who came to our beautiful country, the French, the English, the Ukrainians, the Poles, the Germans, the Italians, the Scotch, the Chinese and all the representatives of the various races who live in this country.

However, by creating a free society, a multiracial and a multicultural society, officially bilingual, will we be able to build a prosperous, peaceful, harmonious, mature Canada we all want to be heirs to?

[*English*]

I think we must adopt the principle that every Canadian and every group has the same rights under the law as every other. There were certain specific guarantees set out in the constitution of 1867. If the Fathers of Confederation in 1867 granted to the French and English certain rights, we are not at this stage going to attempt to rewrite history. But it would be fatal to accept as a principle that

there is some kind of chronological priority of rights which applies to those who came earlier. If this were the case then the Indians and the Eskimos would have more rights than anyone, but as a matter of fact they have fewer.

No one should have any special rights in this or any country except those set out in the constitution, and constitutions can be rewritten. Every person in this country today, whether newly arrived or in the second, third, or fourth generation is an immigrant or descendant of immigrants. This applies to native Canadians who migrated in successive waves across the Bering Strait. There should not, therefore, be any recognition of rights based on earlier arrival. Every Canadian, whether he arrived in 1600 or in 1969, should have the same status, with the possible exception as I have said of the guarantees laid down in the constitution. They are there not as divine rights but as matters of national convenience.

If we are talking about chronological priority, the first arrivals were the Indians and Eskimos. The Scandinavians have a claim. They arrived soon after—"Sail now and pay later." Then came Christopher Columbus. He was an Italian. That gives the Italians a claim. John Cabot showed up in 1497. Jacques Cartier appeared in 1534. There was Cartier-Real in 1501. He was Portuguese. In 1524 Verrazano came along. Henry Hudson came along in 1607. We must not forget that Cortez got to Mexico in 1519, too early for the Winter Games. Then, of course General de Gaulle did not make his discovery until 1967.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Order. It being six o'clock p.m. this house stands adjourned until Monday at two o'clock p.m.

At 6 p.m. the house adjourned, without question put, pursuant to special order.