

Negroes as follows, and I quote from his remarks in a Canadian legislature:

—the greatest calamity ever known in the two evil counties I have the honour of representing.

The immigration policy of the new Canadian nation in 1867 was also discriminatory in nature favouring as it did the British and Europeans as opposed to Orientals and others. The thousands of Chinese who came to British Columbia in the 1880s were slaves to all practical purposes, to the extent that Chinese companies literally sold them under contract to Canadian mining and railway companies. Their living conditions and the general manner in which they were treated were simply not human. Let us not forget that the Dominion Elections Act of 1885 provided, and I quote:

The expression "person" means any male person, including an Indian, and excluding a person of Mongolian or Chinese race;

No later than in 1975, there were 20 Canadian immigration officers scattered across the United Kingdom whereas there were only four in the New Delhi office to deal with all the applications filed by Indian applicants. In 1955, the Minister of Immigration stated the following, and I quote:

I do not believe that any immigrant, wherever he comes from or whatever his skills, is worth a Canadian baby because the former must learn to be a Canadian whereas the latter is a Canadian from the very beginning.

During the depression years, the Ku Klux Klan was strongly rooted in some parts of Saskatchewan, Alberta and Ontario. The Regina riot in 1935 and the general strike in Winnipeg provided many cases of violation of civil liberties. Later on, during World War II, 23,000 Canadians of Japanese origin were interned in various parts of Canada under the War Measures Act, even though 75 per cent of them had been born in Canada and many of them had been genuine Canadians for several generations. At about the same time, Jehovah Witnesses were outlawed; in 1940, 29 members of this sect were sentenced to one year in jail.

In 1953, 1955 and 1957, the Quebec Padlock Act, the regulations restricting the distribution of religious literature, were challenged before the courts. Not so long ago, in 1974, in the Laval vs Bédard case, the Supreme Court ruling clearly emphasized the weakness and flimsiness of the Canadian Bill of Rights which everybody thought was adequate protection. That is what must be prevented today. Our own history is not beyond reproach. Our statutes are not stringent enough. We know about the Indian Act and its discriminatory provisions regarding Indian women; that must be kept from happening in our Canada of the future and that is what the proposal before us is all about.

The Constitution

In Manila, in the Philippines, Pope John Paul II said on Tuesday and I quote:

Nothing can justify a breach of human rights even in exceptional circumstances.

Governments are there, he said, to serve the people and protect their dignity. They cannot pretend to serve the people's interests when they do not respect basic individual rights.

Human rights are paramount.

—strongly claimed the Pope.

What does the official opposition suggest? That the charter of rights and freedoms be referred to the provinces? But this would simply kill our proposal. Let us recall again the statements made last fall by the premiers: seven of them strongly opposed the entrenchment of a Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the Constitution of Canada, and now this is what the Premier of Manitoba had to say:

● (1620)

[English]

—while Manitoba actively supports the protection of human rights it opposes the entrenchment of a charter of rights on principle.

[Translation]

The Premier of Saskatchewan, the Hon. Allan Blakeney, a man whom every member in this House would have thought to be all out in favour of human rights has said and I quote:

[English]

Saskatchewan is not in favour of entrenching in the Canadian Constitution the human rights which are ordinarily referred to as fundamental rights or legal rights or as the case may be. I share with Premier Lyon this view—

[Translation]

The Premier of British Columbia has said:

[English]

B.C. believes that individual rights and fundamental freedoms must be protected but we remain satisfied that the most appropriate method is through the exercise of the authority of the legislatures of the provinces and the Parliament of this nation.

[Translation]

The Premier of Alberta has stated and I quote:

[English]

So we come down to a conclusion that the better way to protect the rights of the citizens of our province . . . is . . . to leave that responsibility to the elected representatives.

[Translation]

The premiers of Quebec, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia have expressed exactly the same views, that within their provincial borders rights are not threatened. There lies the Achilles' heel, the weakness of the provincial position. Everything is seen, gauged, weighed, thought out, in a strictly limited perspective confined to the territory of one province.