

*The Address—Mr. Fortin*

It gives me pleasure to stress the increasingly important part the commonwealth is called upon to play in the world. We must admit, Mr. Speaker, that not so long ago, the commonwealth was something known only to our more cultured citizens. But in the last few years, and especially in the last few months, it seems that the whole Canadian people have had their eyes opened with regard to the British commonwealth and realized that this was a true force, a group of nations whose one ambition was peace in this world.

May I also stress in passing that, to my mind, the greatest factor contributing to better knowledge of the commonwealth, and to placing our country at the summit of those commonwealth nations has undoubtedly been the recent trip of the right hon. Prime Minister throughout those countries.

After the war, we have often found ourselves facing a more or less fearsome crisis. Sometimes it was veiled or open invasion of some corner of the world. I believe the government which in our particularly dangerous times manoeuvre wisely in favour of world peace, is to be commended. As we are neighbours of the United States, and closely linked to Great Britain, our situation is extremely delicate. As a member of the United Nations and geographically situated in the front line in case of war, Canada could nevertheless not remain coolly neutral; Canada had to take a definite position and advocated moderation. For moderation has to be advocated. We are happy to note that, while preaching moderation, our government stood firm and strong against the dangerous propaganda which had broken out all over the world.

Allow me also to stress how glad we are to note that the government will do more to help under-developed countries. All over the world, hunger is being felt. There are under-developed countries which, at one time, were in distress, or had always been so. But the difference now is that formerly those countries did not know that they were in distress, because they had no point of comparison. Thanks to modern means of communications the peoples of the under-developed countries are now in a position to realize what goes on in other countries. Therefore, they envy those countries, and being under-developed, they beg help from the first one at hand. Now bread when one wants it, is readily accepted, from whatever

quarter it may come. That is why I believe that the first duty of the Canadian nation is to accept generously the sacrifices which may be asked of her, sacrifices which will allow us to help those under-developed nations, so that at last they may turn away from communist propaganda, and may once and for all see the light that is being held out to them by the free nations.

*(Text):*

The coming year, Mr. Speaker, will bring back to our memory an historical event that should be the object of a special observance. In my home town of Quebec city, we are about to celebrate this year the 200th anniversary of the battle of the Plains of Abraham. Although it is an observance that involves my home town in a most intimate way, I wish to invite the whole population to join in that celebration and to remember that 1759 marks a particular event in Canadian history. It marks the beginning of an experiment that has been very successful. This experiment subsequently required two nationalities to live together and to work together toward the creation of a new nation.

*(Translation):*

We have now reached an extremely important crossroads in our national history. It must be remembered that 200 years ago, on the heights of Quebec, soldiers were meeting in battle. From enemies that they were then, they have become compatriots, fellow-citizens, friends, and brothers, and both groups have worked, each in its own field of human endeavour, each in its own environment, to build the Canadian nation. After 200 years of efforts and of association, the Canadian nation today feels compelled to analyse and to define itself. Canadians, as a writer has said, are somewhat like youths in search of their own soul and of an ideal.

In the past, and even to this day, there has often been talk of national unity and of Canadianism. These terms, however, are always given too abstract a meaning. They are important so to speak, to the extent where they are translated into practice. Is Canadianism something real, or is it fiction? It is a fact. Indeed, to be a Canadian is to think and act as a Canadian. In order that such Canadianism may become the heritage of all Canadians, of whatever origin, Canadians must remain deeply aware of their origin and must make every effort to understand themselves. A third of the Canadian nation