



A REPLY FROM CANON LIONEL GROULX

# WHY WE ARE DIVIDED

An address delivered at the Monument National (Montreal), on November 29, 1943, under the auspices of the Ligue d'Action Nationale. Introduced by Mr. Jacques Perrault, lawyer, the speaker was thanked by Mr. Roger Duhamel, journalist of *Le Devoir* (Montreal).

## TRANSLATOR'S FORWARD

We humans like to believe what we want to believe. Unfortunately what we want to believe is not always true. One of the things which we want to believe is that other people are responsible for all that is wrong in the world. But of course it is at least possible that we have some faults ourselves. And if someone would only tell us what they are, it would be much easier for us to correct them than it is for us to correct the other fellow's faults.

All is not well in Canada today. Our two great cultural groups, the French and the English, are not getting along together as well as they should. Whose fault is it? Before we can do anything about the situation we must be sure that we know exactly what the real causes of division are, — especially those for which our own group is responsible. Then we must try to remove these causes.

It is easy for French-speaking people to hear what French speakers think about the question, and it is equally easy for English-speaking people to hear it discussed by English speakers. But it would be more profitable if each group could open-mindedly listen to those who best represent the other. And this does not mean listening carefully selected members of the other group whose views happen to be the same as ours, rather than the same as the majority of their own people. If we wish to know why most French Canadians do not like the National Resources Mobilization Act, for instance, we should ask one who voted “NO” in the plebiscite, rather than one of the small minority in Quebec who voted “YES”.

Canon Groulx is a French Canadian who commands great respect and influence among his people. As the Professor of Canadian History at the University of Montreal, he has built up a well-established reputation both as an historian and as a teacher. He has a way of turning his students into disciples fired with a burning zeal. Therefore when he expresses his opinion as to why we are divided, every English-speaking Canadian should have an opportunity to know what he says. Naturally, as a French-speaking Catholic, his approach will be different to that of an English-speaking Protestant like myself, — a fact which makes his views all the more interesting.

The address which is printed here was written, not for English, but for French Canadians. It is given in full and without change. The translation is too literal to do justice to Canon Groulx's literary style, — a sacrifice which has been made in order to keep as close as possible to his original words. In reading them, I suggest that we should try to remember the advice of Confucius: “When you hear words that are distasteful to your mind, you must enquire whether they are not right.”

Gordon O. Rothney  
Social Sciences Division,  
Sir George Williams College,  
Montreal.

## WHY WE ARE DIVIDED

I am not quite the first to deal with this subject. I know that it is full of dangers and pitfalls. Our independent and impartial C.B.C. allows only certain people to talk about it. I know that this cloth I wear requires me to be careful and discreet. But I know, too, that truth sometimes requires intelligent courage.

### I. CAUSES OF DIVISION OF A GENERAL NATURE

Why are we divided? The question is often asked, though in merely asking it one assumes a painful state of affairs. When a country's leaders are always talking about *union* and national *unity*, it shows that these things do not exist except as ideals. We are disunited, profoundly disunited. That is the hard fact. National union has never been so weak in Canada as during this war. And never before, we might add, have such clumsy attempts been made to preserve it.

But what are the causes and who are the people which have divided us? A mystery, — and unanswerable question? Not unless we dodge the issue or seek the culprits where they are not to be found.

Our divisions, like all divisions between countries, peoples, or nationalities, have fundamentally the same general causes. Man turns away from man the day he turns away from God. If people do not believe themselves to be children of the same Father, then the brotherhood of man is dead. One cannot love God without loving one's neighbour. Ever since Cain, if you like, or since Adam, we've had a fratricidal tendency in our blood. We seem to have taken Cain as an example. Like him, man has not merely refused to be his brother's keeper. Men hate and kill each other.

— 5 —

This hatred has spread from person to person, from clan to clan, from class to class, from tribe to tribe, from people to people, as human organizations have become larger and more diversified, and as they have opposed each other because of interests or differences of blood, of culture, or of ideas. In ancient and modern times alike, political or military empires and great economic forces have all failed to produce the brotherhood of man. Internally, empires have too often bullied small peoples and thus driven them to desperation. Externally, because of covetousness, and a desire to monopolize the riches of the earth, empires and economic organizations have provoked competition and rival organizations, — have precipitated savage wars.

Leagues of Nations controlled by the Big Fours of Big Five have done no better. Christianity remains

the only real attempt in the world's history to re-establish human brotherhood. It reminds us of our common origin. It reminds us to say "Our Father who art in Heaven". It has added the further conception of a God assuming our form, giving us a brother and a leader, and establishing for us the incomparable brotherhood of the Church, a brotherhood which associates men not only in the same faith, but in the same hopes, the same love, and the same eternal happiness. But when Francis I of France, to save his country from being crushed by the Austro-Spanish forces, made an alliance with the Turks and the Protestant princes; and when the Reformation tore to pieces the seamless robe of Christianity, then the commonwealth of united Christendom accomplished by the Middle Ages was well and truly destroyed. The old causes of division, for a while mitigated by Christianity, were again let loose, with unprecedented violence. Eighteen hundred years after the death of Christ, Joseph de Maistre could make this bitter but just statement: "The nations do not love each other". Everywhere they are divided by frontiers which are now traditional, — race, colour, language, faith, interests. One must deplore such a state of affairs. No politician, sociologist, or historian who makes any claim to a healthy realism, has any right to ignore, nor even to minimize, these deep-rooted causes of division. Moreover, we have had sad experience in Canada of how these conflicts of belief, of language, and of culture have disunited us even more, perhaps, than conflicts of interests.

To demonstrate that for ten centuries Englishmen and Frenchmen shared the same Roman Catholic faith; that their two languages have exchanged thousands of words, and that after all, to quote Clemenceau, England is only "an old French colony gone astray", — to think up beautiful ideas like these is not the way to have much effect on an Orangeman of Brockville or Toronto. There is no use trying to bring us together by showing that we are close to each other in blood and culture, — otherwise the Poles would have no better friends than the Russians.

— 6 —

## II. SPECIFIC CAUSES

### HISTORY?

Apart from these general causes of division, are there others which apply more specifically to our country? According to some, the chief responsibility lies with History. And the strange (I am tempted to say grotesque) idea has been put forth that the History of Canada should be taught in the same way from one ocean to the other, with a single text book in which our History would be carefully smoothed out and written with a mixture of ink and honey and — a little soft soap. Of course I don't want a history full of hatred and passion. But two kinds of history cannot exist. I know only one — history which is objective and impartial. Once, when certain University men tried to force me to write an official history, and gave me a choice between my University chair and my freedom, I replied that I would choose freedom. History as a means of propaganda (or official History, which amounts to the same thing), is the very negation of History. The only real History is that which says, not what could have been or should have been, but what has been, no more, no less. It must call the good, good, and the bad, bad. It takes into account, of course, the ideas, the atmosphere, and the customs of each age. But it has not the right to alter the truth in any way, and even less to pardon everything. Don't worry, such a history does not teach the hatred of the English. It would teach rather to know a certain type of Englishman as he really is. It would not be the servant, I hope, of politicians, promoters of national union at all costs, nor yet of those who more or less consciously want a "melting-pot". It would have

the invaluable merit of not teaching lies and of not sabotaging the past. And I would even add that it would do more to bring about an intelligent genuine *bonne-entente* that those apostles of concord who are either self-interested or naive will ever accomplish. Supposing objective history did no more than to teach French Canadians not to think of the British conquest as necessarily a “providential benefaction”, or of the expulsion of the Acadians as a somewhat hurriedly conducted tour, — a theme for Longfellow's poetry; not to confuse a Craig with a Sherbrooke, a Sydenham with a Bagot, a Metcalfe with an Elgin; not to mistake the Durham Report for a Christmas greeting nor to put it down to a little indigestion on the part of a Lord who had overeaten; not to consider the Union of the Canadas as an outburst of brotherly affection nor the school laws of the English provinces as monuments of legislative wisdom or a unique chance to learn English; if, to put it bluntly, it taught nothing else to our compatriots than to make a distinction between justice and injustice, between right and hypocrisy, — not to mistake a kick for a compliment, — and finally to know in what country we live and with whom we live and to regulate our attitudes accordingly, —

— 7 —

such a history, I venture to say, would work effectively for good understanding in Canada because the way to come to terms with English-Canadians is to make the French-Canadians neither a naive nor an enslaved people, but a people with their eyes open and as much backbone as the English.

Furthermore, regarding this idea of a uniform or single history, could we adopt it without betraying some of the greatest and most original aspects of our past? If there is one strong chain in this past it is Catholicism. French Canada is, more than anything else, a child of the Church. In fact, a whole epoch of her history grew out of faith and mysticism. Her fundamental social institutions, her customs, her traditions, come to her directly from the Christian spirit and her French law. If there is a constant factor in the life of our people, it is their missionary spirit; first evangelizing the American Indians, then sending pastors to every diocese in Canada and to a considerable part of the United States; then, in recent times, a producer of apostles for the conversion of heathen continents. Now, I ask those of good faith how a uniform history to suit the taste of all sects and of agnostics, how such a history can be written and taught without the risk of altering or obscuring to our detriment some of the essential aspects, indeed the foundation, of our life? If it were possible, moreover, to write this smoothed-down and patched-up history, whom would it profit? Which of the two races has the more apologies to make? Which has, in its past, the more disagreeable acts to strike out? You find here again the old doctrine of abjection, the politicians' old tradition of unilateral and unlimited concessions. They ask us to forget our past; I am all for it, provided that they forget both sides of it, and that, for example, one group does not believe itself to be still on the Plains of Abraham or in front of the signature of the capitulation of Montreal. I accept any forgetfulness which will serve to bring us nearer to one another; but I don't want a forgetfulness which will only serve to put us to sleep. Moreover, this camouflaged history, eminently suited to make our people into a race which cheerfully receives knocks, injuries, a race resigned to any humiliation, politicians of every stripe can try if it pleases them to impose it upon our schools. For my part, I believe that I know teachers who will not teach it and little French Canadians who will never learn it.

Moreover, apparently our English-Canadian friends do not all have a very firm confidence in the effectiveness of *bonne-ententiste* history. Concerning a study by Sophy L. Elliott, *The Women Pioneers of North America*, an idealistic history which aims at cementing friendship and understanding between the races in Canada, Mr. R. M. Saunders, of the University of Toronto, protests in the *Canadian Historical Review* (March, 1943), against the rise of a history in which he sees “naivete and a lack of realism”. “Writers with such aspirations should realize that if greater harmony is to be cultivated

between these two groups, they must meet together and study their existing contemporary problems”.

— 8 —

Sensible and true! A doctored history would do no good for the excellent reason that to look for the causes of our divisions in history is to look where those causes are not to be found. Just let the pact of 1864-7 be faithfully observed; just let French Canadians from one end of the country to the other be treated, not as brothers (we don't ask that much) nor with generosity, but simply with the justice due to associates of equal rights, and more simply still, as a race which has a right along with all the others in the world to the four liberties prescribed so grandiloquently by the Atlantic Charter, — and who would then believe that the exploits of Winslow, of Lawrence, of Wolfe, of Craig, of Dalhousie, of Colborne, of Durham, of Metcalfe, even when told and taught exactly as they were, would prevent our two people from understanding and respecting each other, would prevent especially a people which has always extended the hand of Christian pardon from extending it again in order to bury racial passions and give peace to Canada? It is not what happened yesterday which divides us. It is the injustices which are still being perpetrated.

### EXTREMISM?

Whatever those among us who toady to the Anglo-Saxons may say, we are not extremists. And our so-called extremism is no more the cause of disunion than is history. I know of nothing stranger nor sadder in our life than this morbid propensity for belittling our spirit and of accusing us of every sin, particularly of one we have not committed. Number if you can the good souls who pester us continually with “Watch out” and “Be careful”, as if we were warriors always ready for a campaign, or mad fanatics always wanting to devour our neighbors. I even read in a large French Catholic newspaper, following some statistics concerning the favorable effect upon Quebec of her high birth-rate, these shameful and unbelievable lines: “The large family is the precious monopoly of the French element in Canada. We should not abuse this monopoly”! These singular *bonne-ententistes*, so sweet for others, so sour for their own, more sensitive to disunity among the races than to disunity among their compatriots, so zealous for general reconciliation that they are ready to achieve it at the price of strife among their own brothers, —they would have us believe that we are the wolves in Canada, and that the others are the lambs, which leads to the paradoxical conclusion that it is the lambs who have eaten the wolves. Certainly we are in an epoch of romanticized history. In my opinion there is a very simple way of settling once and for all this question of extremism. Rights have been trampled under foot in this country, and it is known where. Laws and solemn promises have often been violated. Anyone can point out those who despise justice and those who break the constitution. Well, of those who put history into reverse and insist that we have the spirit of the wolf, I ask only one thing, — that they show us our victims. Let them show us the minority or the weak whom we have crushed, the rights upon which we have trampled. Let them cite a case, only one, where national feel-

— 9 —

ing has carried us beyond the limits of right and justice. And if these gentlemen have no complaining victims to produce, what less can we ask of them than that they keep quiet. They want to know what has divided us? Let them look somewhere else besides in Quebec. Let them ask in Charlottetown, in Halifax, in Fredericton, in Toronto, in Winnipeg, in Regina, in Edmonton, in Ottawa, especially in Ottawa. And if in these places there is no reply, there are other ways of finding the answer. Extremists,

French Canadians! I know only one form of extremism among them: extreme candour and credulity, extremism in humbling themselves before the English. If our compatriots deserve to be reproached, it is not for holding tenaciously to a grudge, nor for being slow to pardon. It is for having too short a memory and for always ingenuously believing that each blow they receive will be the last. Surely we are a wounded, humiliated people. During the last hundred and fifty years we have often been cheated, humiliated, bullied, and betrayed. But one must add proudly, we have remained a people without hatred. Extremists that we are, we have never returned blow for blow. Thank God, we do not covet either the goods or the rights of anyone in this country. We do not nourish the slightest desire for vengeance against anyone. And if we could only be left alone and be given no more than justice, then they could demobilize all the *bonne-entente* preachers and send them back to their war effort.

## TRUE CAUSES : FAILURE TO RECOGNIZE THE FRENCH FACT

Since they lie neither in the teaching of history nor in our alleged extremism, where shall we look for the causes of disunion? A major question which no one can evade. One can palaver indefinitely about national unity, about the need for it and the stupidity of disunity. Nothing will be changed as long as we do not get to the root of the matter and have the courage to face the facts when we find them. The first obligation which English and French Canadians owe to each other, and I would also say, the primary condition for a *bonne-entente*, is frankness, I shall avoid subtlety. I say quite simply that so deep a division as that which separates the two races in Canada must have deep-lying causes, for it indicates disagreement on major issues. Let us say it: the two races do not get along well because one of them wants legal equality all right, but on condition that it keeps for itself the lion's share. I know there is nothing new about this truth. I know also that it is a crude truth. But it is true. In the final analysis one category of Englishmen cannot forgive us for existing, — and for claiming to exist with the same rights as these gentlemen, the same liberty, the same dignity. In other words, what they do not wish to recognize nor accept in Canada, with its juridical and political consequences, is the French fact. There does exist a category of open-minded and generous Englishmen with whom we can get along. But there exists another which cannot realize that everybody does not think and feel *à l'anglo-*

— 10 —

*saxonne*, has not the same reactions as the Anglo-Saxons, as if the human race inhabited an Anglo-Saxon universe. I certainly, do not deny, and none of us would dream of denying, Anglo-Saxon greatness. But can they not recognize in certain circles, as ex-President Hoover pointed out the other day, that the Anglo-Saxon race constitutes only 10% of the world's population, and that consequently there are on this planet several handfuls of people who believe themselves to be French, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Russian, Italian, Greek, Bulgarian, Norwegian, even Japanese, Chinese, Burmese, and Hindu, and who, after all, don't seem to mind it? Why do we have here this obstinate opposition to French, not only to its official use in the political sphere, but even to its being taught in minority schools? Why this rationing of culture, imposed on those who inherit one of the world's greatest cultures? Why this opposition to French influence in the federal civil service and even within the ministerial offices? Why this persistent effort to limit the French fact to the borders of Quebec? Why? How can such facts be explained? And if it were we who were guilty of such an attitude, what would our English-Canadian friends see at the bottom of it if not the reflexes of a still virulent racialism, the old spirit of the conqueror always thirsting for domination and knowing well how to keep a respectful distance between the races.

The historian Duncan McArthur, former professor in Canadian history at Queens, and formerly Minister of Education in the Hepburn cabinet, was thinking of that sort of an Englishman when he wrote, in one of his historical works: “In French Canada, after the Conquest, as elsewhere and at other times, the greatest hindrance to the anglicizing of the community was the Englishman”.

We need wonder no further by what phenomenon the right to think, to feel, to act French-Canadian became narrow provincialism and, in war time, isolationism. In this attitude, moreover, these English Canadians see eye to eye with our renegades and our big politicians. According to a good observer, the American journalist William Henry Chamberlain, “the regional spirit is strong in the Dominion” . . . “Every Canadian province”, as he wrote in his book, *Canada to-day and to-morrow*, “has a strong mark of individuality”. This does not prevent French Canadians from being regarded as the only ones sadly afflicted with a particularist spirit! Their particularism alone is a sin. And our sin of particularism is that we sometimes think of our Country before thinking of other people's countries. Have they asked themselves whence come this particularism? Since from 1604 to 1760 the French fact existed alone in Canada. I do not think we have any excuses to make. Since 1760, with whose assent and with whose complicity has the French fact been maintained and strengthened? I ask your indulgence for returning thus to matters I have recalled so many times. In 1764 we refused to become English, in the British Empire. Ten years later the Quebec Act, that is, the Imperial Parliament consecrated, as we know with what *éclat*, this will to

— 11 —

isolation. This consecration the same parliament renewed in 1791 by the forming of Lower and Upper Canada, and this at the express request of the Loyalists and the British emigrants who were to constitute Upper Canada. The deplorable result, which we cannot help, was that, for half a century, Lower Canada continued to live its life as a distinct province or state. In 1841 an attempt was made to return to the assimilation policy of 1764. We became stubborn in our isolationism. We formed a bloc around LaFontaine as for twenty years we had done around Papineau. In 1842, first Bagot and then the Imperial government bowed anew before the irreducible French fact, because they could not do without our political collaboration. The final and most solemn consecration took place in 1867. Confederation was not possible without Quebec, and we refused to enter Confederation except as autonomous province. We thus again became an autonomous province, a French province. Once, twice, thrice, four times. How many times must the French fact be recognized and consecrated before certain people decide to accept and respect it, without undue limitation, without equivocation, without offensive bargaining? There indeed lies one of the main causes of our divisions and our quarrels, and our *bonne-ententistes* would do well to recognize it. There has been an everlasting policy of hesitation, or if you prefer, a two-faced policy — recognizing and not recognizing the French fact, recognizing it but seeking always to limit it and, if possible, to suppress it. In 1774 they seemingly bowed to the French fact. Yet, in this country which was to remain French, to whom did they give political power? To whom went the best of civil positions? To the immense French-Canadian majority? Not at all. To a handful of American loyalists and new immigrants from the British Isles. The first movement of this infamous minority was to begin a fight against the French laws of this province and for the repeal of the Quebec Act. After 1791, in this province, which according to Pitt, Grenville, Burke and several others was to retain its French character, who continued to govern? Did they place confidence again this time in the majority and in the original population of the province? In the face of an elective chamber three-quarters French-Canadian they raised an omnipotent governor, responsible only to London, then an Executive Council and a Legislative Council where never, during fifty years, did the French Canadians hold a majority. In other words, under a political regime supposedly representative or democratic, the



minority, or rather a bureaucratic clique which at first represented less than one-tenth and towards the end less than one quarter of the population, really possessed and exercised power. For half a century this clique governed Lower Canada as it pleased, and maintained institutions which were not only radically opposed to the national character of the province but the very negation of democracy. And in spite of that, some people are amazed that our fathers were at times discontented and that an 1837-38 occurred in our history. Would you care to know how a historian has judged this regime?

“It was”, he wrote, “the very obvious lack of frankness in the process of reversing the policy of the Quebec Act, while profes-

— 12 —

sing to respect it, which increasingly exasperated the French Canadians . . . To insure the French Canadians all the essentials of their nationality, and yet to deny to them the logical and necessary consequences of a complete control of their domestic affairs and of an ultimate escape from the national humiliation of a foreign yoke, was nothing short of the refinement of racial cruelty, which, fortunately for the reputation of British humanity, the English people have repeatedly condemned when practised by other countries. To expect the French Canadians”, continues the same historian, “to voluntarily forego their nationality, and peacefully resign themselves to British citizenship, was the height of absurdity.”

The historian who speaks thus is not a French-Canadian historian and is not a professor at the University of Montreal. He is an English-Canadian historian, Mr. Adam Shortt.

## MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT CONFEDERATION

The last consecration of the French fact took place at the time of Confederation. This was its greatest consecration, completely categorical. No one can be ignorant of what this regime of 1867 was meant to be. In the minds of the Fathers of Confederation it was to be the legal expression of a free collaboration: collaboration between races, collaboration between the provinces. They supposed that they had settled forever, beyond dispute, the French fact, the question of races and languages. An article of the constitution proclaimed the legal and political equality of French and English. According to the statement of the most authorized leader of the English Canadians, there was no longer either conquerors nor conquered in Canada, but associates possessing equal rights in all domains. The new regime asserted the idea of political decentralization. The unitary state, or what was then called legislative union, was rejected in order to form a federation of autonomous provinces, which restored the old Lower Canada to its complete political and national individuality. Quebec even attained, in this federation, a privileged situation, a supplement of guarantees. Paragraph 13 of Article 92 of the constitution assured us exclusive control over property and *civil rights in the province*. According to a judgement of the Privy Council of England, this has the same meaning as article 8 of the *Quebec Act*, and thus the federal parliament should be incapable of removing anything in the domain of our civil rights. Moreover, by article 94 of the same constitution, parliament kept the right of unifying civil law in Ontario, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, but *gave up the same right* in regard to the law of the province of Quebec, which thus became doubly intangible.

These were the basic ideas which gave birth to Confederation; these were the masterly stipulations of the contract of 1867. But what has been the policy, in regard to the French fact, which has generally

been followed in the English-Canadian provinces and at Ottawa for the past seventy-six years? The direct opposite of what it should have been. In all the provinces, the French minorities

— 13 —

have been submitted to a rationing of their culture and to restrictions in the teaching of their religion. At Ottawa, the centre of Confederation, in the parliament and the government which should protect minority rights, the French and Catholic minorities, one after another, have vainly implored protection against the despoilers of their rights. In the federal domain, the French language holds its position with difficulty only at the price of being constantly on the defensive. Canadians of French origin are forced to struggle with a voracious bureaucracy, without too much success, for a meagre share of positions and influence in the civil service. By its social legislation, the federal parliament knowingly undermines our civil rights. Even in our own province, the federal bureaucracy undertakes to pervert and, at times, to demolish our type of workers' organization. What do I say? Ottawa does not respect even the fundamental principle of Confederation. The general tendency of its policy in regard to the provinces is to take over their autonomy. This policy, begun before the war, Ottawa has continued stubbornly with the war as an excuse. Wherever possible, it has tried to extend its ambitious centralization, a uniformism which affects particularly the most differentiated, the most original province, namely Quebec. It endangers its fundamental institutions, its liberty of action and, consequently, its future. Pinned up in the Quebec "reserve", behold our "reserve" itself threatened by assault. Whatever may be the opinion of a contributor to a recent issue of *Relations*, Canada does not deserve to be considered an example to the world for its liberal solution of the problem of nationalities and minority rights, so long as one nationality, ours, which is thirty percent of the population, is not content to see served on the family table, bones already picked over by the lion.

Let us be frank. We are still divided on an extremely serious matter: the interpretation and the execution of the Confederation agreement. The increasing disagreement on the very principle of the federal state bodes ill for the future. A conviction is slowly developing in the uneasy mind of one of the mother-provinces and of one nationality that she can no longer rely on the central power to be protective or impartial. More than that, placing itself at the head of the most hostile elements, this central power plots against the most sacred rights of one province and against the national future of almost a third of the Canadian population.

## **MISUNDERSTANDING AS TO PATRIOTISM**

The misunderstanding unfortunately does not stop there. While deceiving us so completely, the men of Ottawa found means of sowing between the races other seeds of division. When the ethnic groups of a country are too diverse by blood, history and cultural inheritance, there is still the possibility that at least they may meet and come to an understanding through common affection for the same country. A country, to give to the Canadians a country, this was one of the dreams and one of the solemn promises of the men

— 14 —

of 1867. Did they proclaim so loudly their design to create a Canadian soul and spirit, a "new nation", as they said, and yet to this new nation bequeath nothing but the earth we live on? Having hesitated over the name by which they would call it, having thought of Columbia, New Britain, etc., they rallied

to that of Canada, for the name evoked a great history and a superb geographic entity, one built by the immortal explorers. Then, that this Canada might really be for the Canadians, John A. Macdonald talked of making it a “great British monarchy”. He wished to make the Confederation a vice-royalty with a member of the royal family at its head. He and his colleagues proposed to call the new country, “Kingdom of Canada”. You know what has become of this dream of greatness and liberty. For forty years an offensive return to the most abject colonialism has made Canada retrogress toward political infancy, has brought us back, in several particulars, to the condition of “Crown colony”. What have they not done to uproot us, to kill Canadian sentiment? They have exacted of us, for another country, sacrifices they would hardly dare ask for our own land. I understand that some good souls question and no longer know who directs our external policy. Briefly, at the present hour, nothing so much divides Canadians as the equivocacy, the disagreement as to the very reality of the country itself. Honest opinion will tell you that seven out of ten million Canadians see themselves deprived of the right of loving their own country most of all, for the benefit of the country which it pleases a minority of imperialists to impose upon them.

Was it to produce these miseries, this return to colonial servitude, that the Fathers created Confederation? Ladies and gentlemen, I am not a separatist, whatever may be said. I believe and I teach my students of the University of Montreal that Confederation might have been welcomed in 1867 as a great French victory. The ills we suffer, I maintain, come less from institutions than from men. I mean the sort of men who for seventy-six years have held, or rather have degraded among us the role of leaders. I believe that an intelligent and energetic race which would not allow its politicians to betray it, might, in spite of this political statute, develop freely its whole life, including its economic life. On the other hand, I believe that I state the fundamental thought of my compatriots, at least of those who still hold themselves erect, when I speak thus: we want a central power at Ottawa, we do not want a centralizing power. We do not want a super state whose principal care is to demolish the provincial states. Nothing in the world, and certainly not the interests and combinations of the old parties will make us stay in the Confederation to play there the part of Cinderella, or to allow the men of Ottawa to place the burden of national peace on the back of the province of Quebec. They are not going to make of us a perpetual Jonah to be thrown upon the waters whenever the boat gets into trouble. Furthermore, in the family residence we want our place in the living-room with the others. We will not be relegated to the servants' quarters. Finally and especially, enrooted in this land for three centuries, having contributed glo-

— 15 —

riously to the conquest of its independence, at least theoretical, convinced by historical experience and natural law that a free and reasoning man has but one country, and one country only, we shall accept none other than the land of our fathers, Canada. We shall sing no other national song than a Canadian anthem, nor bear any other flag than that of Canada.

### **III. POSSIBLE REMEDY**

I have tried to tell you the real causes of our divisions. Not being a politician, at least I hope not, I have not tried to hide the seriousness of the situation from you. I ask you if the citizens of a country can argue on more serious points than these: disregard or limited acceptance of the French fact and of the Confederation pact; that is, disagreement concerning the national and political structure of the country; and disagreement on the reality or very idea of a native country. That is our subject of disagreement in

its stark reality. Is this to say that there is no remedy for such an evil? I do not believe so. But in order to be clear about the remedy, I repeat that we must realistically decide to what degree, among us, the evil of division can be cured, or, more exactly, how far we can go with this so-called union of races or *national union*. I do not say *national unity*, I say *national union*, according to the advice given us a few years ago by a man of law who knows the value of words, Mr. Antonio Perrault. Union, unity; it is the difference between the possible and the impossible. Since our country has been built as it has, with geographic differences, a mixture of races and beliefs, the federal character of its political constitution, let us ask objectively what can be humanly achieved, what legitimate hope does history allow. Let us ask, also, if there is not a perfection, a summit of *bonne-entente*, for which it would be folly ever to hope. For some of our people, as you know, a supreme, transcendent reconciliation of races must come, cost what it may, even though we should have to pay all the cost and become, as a result, less French.

## BILINGUALISM OR CONTACTS

From this came the demands for bilingualism, an unlimited assimilation of teaching methods and ways of living, and undiscerning contacts. I do not fear to call this false orientation, vain strategy. What good comes of dreaming of the impossible? All history follows strong lines which mark out their own direction. Peoples different by faith, language, law, traditions, and philosophy of life will never be able to think, feel or act alike. Our land is too vast and too diverse to prevent the formation of irresistible regionalism, even in the English-Canadian provinces. We, the French Canadians, are too different. To attempt, under pretext of national union, to reshape our characteristics, the very foundation of our being, is to risk damaging or losing them with-

— 16 —

out profit to our neighbours. Let us remember that it is not healthy or advantageous to a land to seek absolute uniformity. This truth, old as the world, an English-Canadian newspaper, the Halifax Chronicle, recalled to us a short time ago: "But national understanding is a god which Canadians could not adore without danger. For, to give the term its full meaning, embracing the social, cultural and economic realms, would be a stupidity of the worst kind."

Let us beware, consequently, of the illusion of bilingualism, miracle worker of national union. English Canadians and French Canadians would need to talk more together only if their variances rested on misunderstanding. But we have seen that there is something very different from misunderstandings. The Irish of Ireland eventually learned the language of their oppressors. Did they become reconciled thereby? In general, Irishmen and Englishmen speak the same language today. Do they get along any better? We ourselves have pushed bilingualism to the point of imprudence. We have scorned universal experience, forgetting that bilingualism generalized is usually the first phase of a nationality's pangs. We have been led into this imprudence in the name of economic liberation and national unity. However, bilingualism has not prevented us from becoming more than ever the servants of the majority in our province. I do not see our Anglo-Canadian compatriots taking us more closely to their hearts for having learned their language more than they have learned ours.

Let us beware, for the same reasons, of enrolling *en masse* in Anglo-Saxon societies and clubs, infallible recipe, it appears, for ending all racial prejudices. I see clearly what French Canadians too often lose in these contacts; I have yet to discover what they gain. Whatever may come, we cannot enter like a herd into the societies of others, take part, by affiliation, in all the neutral associations,

English or American, show ourselves consequently incapable of forming societies of our own, suited to our own spirit, and keep up any pretension to being a proud race, Catholics of initiative and creative imagination, and, in addition, *leaders* of social life in our province. We cannot play, dress, build, eat, think, feel like Englishmen or Americans and flatter ourselves that we shall remain indefinitely French. Enough of chimerical visions and vain dreams. To come to an understanding with the English, said Jacques Bainville, it is hardly necessary to cough or spit like them. We can unite; we cannot and we never should become unified. In the name of common sense, let us stop dreaming of a marriage of love where only a marriage of reason is possible.

## FALSE STRATEGY

You ask me how to achieve this marriage of reason, this reasonable and realizable *bonne-entente*? Have we so far manoeuvred wisely? If we were to credit the advice of a school of politicians and invertebrates, the good, the only method to appease, to subdue fanaticism is always to give in to it, to attack it with

— 17 —

kindness, moderation and resignation. This would mean never to forget that we are a minority, and that cleverness and prudence would order us to never talk too loudly, to walk softly, to abdicate our liberty of thought and our right to criticize, to listen to and perform on bended knee every wish of the majority, to say “amen” indeed, to every imperialistic extravagance, to regulate our reflexes according to the reflexes of Anglo-Saxons. “When an Englishman loves France”, said Sir Austen Chamberlain, “it is as one loves a woman”. There are those amongst our *bonne-ententistes* who, to become liked by the English, would be capable of changing their sex, if they have actually not already done so. Once more: wrong method; wrong strategy. I call to witness every realist who knows a little of the psychology of the Anglo-Saxon: to appear timid, fearful, to play *the fool* before him, are these the tactics which can win his respect? Is it within the means of the lamb to tame the wolf? The historian of the future, I am sure, will reproach us more than anything else for having acted like poor psychologists in our relations with the English Canadians. We have learned nothing of the psychology of the strong. I do not wish to ignore the existence of an English-Canadian *élite*, animated by the spirit of justice towards French Canadians, ready to admit the duality of culture in Canada, and who even have no other country than ours. The merit of these English Canadians is great enough, in being and in appearing to be what they are, for us not to economize in our esteem and our admiration for them. Is this any reason for hiding from ourselves the fact that for perhaps one fortieth of the English Canadians who have their eyes open, thirty-nine fortieths have their eyes still closed. If there exists an intelligent and generous *élite* which seeks to open these eyes, there is also an *élite* of the wrong sort which devotes itself to closing eyes that wish to open. You wish to deal with this Anglo-Saxon? Begin by remembering that he belongs to an imperialist race which, for two hundred years, has held an incontestable hegemony in the world. One does not wield such power, one does not play such a role for two centuries, without the idea of domination becoming instinctive and awakening a terrible racial pride. To this dominating passion, the Anglo-Saxon of Canada adds a somewhat troubled element. Paradoxical as may appear my assertion, I dare to say that he suffers from an inferiority complex. Recollect that, in Lower Canada before 1867, he lived for about a hundred years as a minority; in the United Canadas until about 1850, he remained a minority. Today, in this diverse country of nationalities so ill-mixed, in the dilemma of becoming again a minority, it seems as though he always fears losing the reins. To safeguard his supremacy, you will see him periodically seize upon projects for massive British immigration, but above all upon the ever-

present imperialist idea. Imperialism is for him a motive force, his insurance premium against anxiety. In the final analysis, the Anglo-Canadian is an uncompromising imperialist, fiery, more imperialist than the imperialist of England, because he is an uneasy imperialist with an always exacerbated racial passion. Very attached, moreover, to the little European

— 18 —

island which has made him one of the great world's great, he needs time to take root in another earth. It is not unusual, you will have observed, that in setting foot on Canadian soil, a new arrival from England takes on the airs of a young squire because he still thinks he is treading the soil of a colonial possession of the motherland, strengthened in his conviction by the childish attitude of a land which unceasingly clings to the skirts of the motherland. "Metropolitan mentality, a newly-arrived immigrant," say we, with a smile. Nevertheless, let us not forget that to lose this new-comer attitude the Anglo-Canadian needs at least a four or five generation stay in Canada. How unwise then to act the colonial before him more than we need. You wish to know why we are divided? To those who are always looking beside the question, I can answer simply: because there is too much arrogance and pride on one side and not enough on the other; because, on one side, there is abuse of the desire for power and domination, and on the other there is abuse of resignation and of naivete.

### **FAILURE OF APPEASEMENT (*Diplomatie roucoullante*)**

If time and experience can teach anything, it is the startling and complete failure of our policy of excessive candour, of unconditional cooperation, and, more than that, of what I would call our languorous or sighing diplomacy; others would call it bleating or servile. For after all if French Canadians are still ill-treated at home, could it be because they have refused to cooperate in the edification and the peace of this country? They have always cooperated to the point of feebleness, to the sacrifice of their most sacred interests, consequently to the point of silliness. We have cooperated, collaborated since 1760. "While the said inhabitants obey and conform to the said orders, they shall enjoy the same privileges as the ancient subjects of the king", promised Amherst. Lord Egremont wrote him from England: "As you observed very truly, they have become the equals of the other subjects of his majesty". Subjects equal to the others. Have you ever heard that any governor of the period reproached us for lack of docility? Yet, as early as 1764, the metropolis hastened to declare that our fathers, being Catholics, were shorn of all civil and political rights and were second-class subjects. Even so, we cooperated in 1776, when our nobles and clergy by their loyalty, and our people by their neutrality, saved the country for England. We cooperated in the time of the French revolution; we even, at that time, called the English conquest a "providential blessing". We cooperated in 1812 on the morrow of Craig's bullying. We cooperated in 1842, when the Union set-up pointed against Lower Canada would have justified a revival of insurrection. We cooperated in 1848 to endow the country at last with "responsible government" and to prevent, in spite of the Tory loyalists, annexation to the United States. We cooperated in 1867, despite the dangers which Confederation meant for us. And, since 1867, although the federative pact, as we have seen, has been made into a dupe's bargain, and often into a trap, we have continued to

— 19 —

collaborate; we have done so in spite of the unworthy treatment inflicted upon our minorities, upon our language too often looked upon as though it were a Hottentot dialect. Each time that one of our rights

was disputed, we have had political chiefs to ask us, in the name of peace and national unity, to give up a share of our rights. For peace and national unity we gave way every time. Decoy-ducks for M.P.'s, Senators, decoy-ducks for ministers, trained to entice their compatriots towards the hiding-place of those great hunters who are the masters of Ottawa, or towards the princes of financial dictatorship. We have had enough of these to tear from us, shred by shred, our patrimony and our ancient pride. Political history, since Confederation, teaches that the majority of our supposedly great leaders have been more than anything else, "yes men". We collaborated during the war of 1914 and during this war, regardless of what so many decoy-duck majors may say. Certainly we have not gone, like others, to the point of hysteria and delirium. We have refused to confuse collaboration with a policy of colonial servitude or a policy of national suicide. As much as anyone, we have, none the less, given our money and our children. In our criticism of the war policy, we have never gone beyond the limits of a just freedom, of that liberty which we are supposed to defend on every shore of the world. We collaborated in 1914 when they took advantage of the war to cut the throats of our minorities. Since 1939 we have been collaborating while they take advantage again of the war to oust us more than ever from the services of the state, to begrudge us the positions of command in the navy, the air force and the army. We collaborated even when they tore up the constitution, to make us understand, no doubt, that the cult of democracy, the franchise and the rights of small peoples, are all articles for export. In a word, of all possible concessions, which have we not made, even of those we ought not to have made? What have we gained? Crumbs, nothing but crumbs, and, for added measure, that haughty and subtle disdain of our English-Canadian compatriots who, in giving crumbs, act as though they are always according too much. The most flamboyant proof of the failure of collaboration without return and of languorous diplomacy has been provided us recently when to amend the federal constitution, they overlooked the formal wishes of Quebec. In this serious situation what attention did the Ottawa government pay to the warnings of the highest authorities of the province? As much attention as a locomotive does to the dust on the rail. It hastily confronted Quebec with the most dangerous act the central government has ever committed. So dangerous that Mr. Godbout who, in such circumstances is not accustomed to sin by extreme pessimism, was unable to keep back this word of disillusionment: "If they can amend the constitution without consulting the provinces, the constitution is no longer worth anything to us."

## **REALISTIC DIPLOMACY**

What is to be done? A child would reply: "Do not persist in your failure, and in the absurd; change your strategy", Parti-

— 20 —

cularly at Ottawa. For our languorous diplomacy we should substitute the diplomacy of dignity. For collaboration without return or without profit we should substitute a collaboration based on interest, on give and take. Note well: I do not suggest a policy of unnecessary stiffness, even less of violence. I do not ask for war and I do not urge war. I propose the only course left to us, the course of legitimate defence. I do not preach an attitude of retreat; I want a policy of being present whenever there is need of being present, but only on a footing of equality and dignity. We do not need to show that we want national peace in Canada more than anyone else, since we have made more sacrifices for it than anyone else. We always keep our hand open and outstretched, but we no longer hold out a soft hand to be crushed. We cease to beg for union as if guilty of disunion, or as if the problem of understanding were not at least ninety-five percent an English-Canadian problem rather than a French-Canadian problem. To sum up, we do not refuse to collaborate; but it must be two-sided collaboration. Our collaboration is

no longer inspired, guided, by party servility, but by the interest of the province and of nationality when this interest is not contrary to the general interest. And we always retain the freedom to withdraw our collaboration. A policy of the earth, earthy, they will say to me. A realistic policy; a compulsory policy. The time has passed when there were for us optional policies or strategies. Since the spirit of justice and of charity proved incapable of producing national peace in Canada, what else can we try except to create it along the lines of interest? Agreements between nations are reached every day and have been for a long time on this prosaic basis. Let us call it, if it pleases sensitive souls, an *entente cordiale*. We all know those *ententes cordiales* where all that is lacking is cordiality. The *entente cordiale* between France and England was born, writes Jacques Bainville, “the day England began to fear the German fleet”. It remains cordial, we know, as long as the German peril lasts and as long as the French army is worth something. Certainly, a Christian people can and should put some feeling in its political relations. Let us not put sentimentality into them, especially when the others do not do so.

## IN QUEBEC

In Quebec let us be strong with all our strength. Let us take heed of the incomparable value of our geographic position. In 1867 Confederation could not have been made without us; we have remained indispensable to Confederation. We are the arch which links the East and the West. By the river we guard the great door to the sea; through our territory we give passage to the transcontinental railways on their way to the ports of the Atlantic and the Pacific. Quebec, the nearest Canadian territory to Europe, furnishes aerial transport with its most convenient bases and landing fields. There may be richer lands than ours; nevertheless we possess some of the most opulent riches of Canada and of America. We possess them in sufficient variety to build one of the best balanced economies of the world. These riches

— 21 —

should no longer be offered to the stranger for some handfuls of cents or dollars. Let us regain those we have lost by every means which we can learn from our economists, particularly by the cooperative system. We have considerable purchasing power. Following the example of the whole world, let us use it for our own benefit first. Would certain mercantile races insult or frown upon us if we ceased to make their fortune for them? We have labour; let us not lower the market for it. Let us exact a just return from those who live and grow rich at our expense. Let us not abandon our workers to leaders from beyond our borders or elsewhere who ask nothing better than to sell us a Trojan horse.

We have political power. We should keep it entirely for ourselves. We should tear it from the domination of financial powers, from the claws of Ottawa. Let us above all have a definite policy. We must play an important part in the federal capital. We should remember that for a state the first condition for a strong foreign policy is a strong internal policy. See where a policy empty of all French-Canadian national interest has led us. In Quebec, it has led us to become the tools of the minority; in Ottawa, of the majority.

In Quebec, the minority has profited by it to undermine our economic and social structure; in Ottawa the majority has profited by it to undermine our political and national structure. As to the constitutional position of the provinces in regard to the central power, let us clear our minds of any obsolete idea; let us revolutionize our political concepts. The political authority of Quebec does not rest on any delegated powers. It is in no way “an emanation of the Canadian government or of the English government”. In



other words, and contrary to what they have too long taught us, the provinces do not hold their authority from the government at Ottawa; nor are they subordinate to it. As for the power which article 92 of the federal constitution concedes to them, their powers are exclusive and supreme; thus in internal sovereignty, the Canadian provinces are properly sovereign states. And I did not do this, need I add. I quote the teaching of our best jurists, themselves commentators on many decisions of the Privy Council of England. Let us then leave to others the denunciation, in season and out, of provincialism. Let us recollect rather that the provinces have every reason in the world to refuse to become colonies of Ottawa. To sum up, when we have our economic life well in hand, we shall begin to be respected. When we find the courage and the means to govern ourselves for ourselves, others will court us. Then we shall be able to dispense with *bonne-ententistes* preachers.

## **POLICY OF PROVOCATION?**

Some will mistake this realistic policy for a policy of provocation. What could be better calculated, they will say, to raise against us the majority of this country. You can see them already, brandishing the English bugbear at us as though we were children, after the manner of our politicians. My response will be brief. The English bogeyman does not exist. The British no longer form

— 22 —

the majority in this country; and, as we have said, it *implies* that all Britons are fanatics. Just and sincere men are able to understand that to defend one's right is not to attack the rights of others. And if they could not understand, what good would it do to talk any longer of an *entente* or of national peace? The proof that the bogeyman of our neighbours is not formidable is that they dread us as much as we dread them. As a matter of fact, while our opportunists raise before us the Anglo-Canadian bogeyman, the Anglo-Canadian fanatics raise before their people the French-Canadian bogeyman. Moreover, we are not alone in this land. If the English Canadians do not want our alliance and our collaboration, or even if they do want it, we should turn more than ever to the New Canadians. With them we have at least this in common that they have no other native land than Canada and desire no other. They came here to live, like us, an ideal life of generous liberty. We are not alone in America. An interrelationship and a balance of forces have been established that can never be broken. If it happens that political leaders menace us, and that has been known to happen, and we are assailed by anxiety, we should remember that our situation is no worse than that of the Ireland of de Valera, now free, but still at the very doors of its former jailor, a jailor ill-reconciled to his expulsion from the Emerald Isle. We should remember especially that we are three million souls in Canada and that it is not in the power of any country, of any state, to govern against the interest of thirty percent of its population when this thirty percent refuses to allow it.

## **ANTI CHRISTIAN POLICY?**

Some good souls will ask me: What do you make of the Christian spirit which teaches never to abandon the dreams of a brotherhood of races and nations in the charity of Christ? To them I reply: let us keep intact our Christian idealism, let us keep the dream, the hope of a national peace ever more firm and ever more generous. We must not forget, however, that we live in a world of earth and flesh. The Christian, so great in every way, is not necessarily a great sucker. The “Christian genius”, clearly explained Gonzague de Reynold, is “a spiritual being who submits to reality”. May the real, the

practical remain then, at least occasionally, our landing field.

I insist that we do not ask better than to set up with our associates what the realist Franklin Roosevelt calls the relationship of “good neighbourhood”. For peace, for understanding, we remain the same chivalrous race, loyal to its word and to its undertakings, disposed to forget all and to pardon all, always ready to go half way. However, I do not see that the Christian spirit, which is one of wisdom, even of political wisdom, obliges us to go all the way alone, much less to adopt the attitude of the vanquished bearing the white flag. That this solution, this attitude may be a solution and attitude exemplarily Christian, I recall from the illustrious examples of O'Connell, and of Wind-

— 23 —

thorst, who, to save their country or their Christianity, did not fear to resort to these practical means. This solution is essentially Christian because it applies to the strong, to the immoderate use of force, the only break which is effective; because it preserves for the feeble and the small a consciousness of their rights and their dignity. Finally, it produces an atmosphere whence cannot fail to emerge respect instead of racial suspicion, esteem instead of charity. These are, and will be for a long time, the only bases for national or realizable union in Canada.

## **APPEAL TO TEACHERS**

I see before me, in this audience, many teachers and many young people. Teachers, young and old, I trust that I have convinced you that the only future for our people lies in a sort of sublimation of its life. Raise as high as you can the spiritual ideal of education; raise the moral level of youth. Rehabilitate our race. Cost what it may, the frightening number of renegades or of decoy-ducks amongst us must diminish. From our political life must disappear that abominable ideal by which so many Catholics reach the belief that anything is permissible which hurts their province and nationality, not excepting treason, if it saves or even profits the party. The great sorrow for any man of faith and upright life is not to be discussed, misunderstood and even insulted but to see the depressing spectacle of cowardice and desertion among his former fellow-travellers. It is the cynicism of men in the maturity of age, his friends of yesterday, who, to rid their conscience of the corpses of an ideal, try their skill at sarcasm, sneering at the enthusiasms and exuberances of their youth. It is a funeral procession of spineless dogs, floating with the stream, poignant symbol of a race betrayed by its leaders.

Teachers, to put an end to these sorrows, to these moral miseries of a Catholic people, you know as well as I to what good use you may put our Catholicism. I will not dwell on it. May I beg you to pity a poor people, so great yesterday, which today knows not whither it goes, nor what it wishes, nor what is desired of it. Teach the young a greater sense of the continuity and beauty of our destiny. Teach them especially that we have a destiny and a magnificent one. Tell them more often that if we remain French in essence and a people of faith, we can be for the good of Canada, esteemed by those who do not stop at material greatness. We can be a ferment of marvellous life also for the whole continent, the dispenser of one of the greatest cultures of the world. Recall also to this youth our historic greatness, our titles, our right to be proud in the presence of English Canadians. Remind them that we are neither a nuisance nor a shame to Canada and that, in the building of our common homeland, our share, though different, is as great as that of anyone. To recall our services to Canada, or to old England, we are accustomed to name two dates: 1776, 1812. It is to belittle our history. For one hundred and fifty years we built this land alone; we discovered, explored, cultivated, evangelized it. Without intending it, but at no

less profit to her, we prepared a jewel for the British crown. Today, we may assert it strongly: if there was once a Canada which was a British possession, and if there is today a Canada pure and simple, it is because there was first of all a French Canada, kept French by us in spite of her conquerors. If at the treaty of St. Germain-en-Laye, New France had remained with Kirke and all North America had become an English possession, who can doubt that this Canada would not have been torn from England's possession in the struggle for American independence? If, on the morrow of the treaty of Paris, the Canadians had emigrated as they had the right to do, and if they had left the field clear for Americans from the south and British immigrants; if, in 1763, we had submitted to the harshness of the Royal Proclamation, and, having surrendered to London's policy of assimilation had lost or allowed reasons for remaining Catholic and French to grow weak, who can say that Canada would have resisted the seductive call that came from Philadelphia in 1776? If in 1849 we had made common cause with the annexationist Tories, that is to say with the fine flower of British Loyalism in full revolt against the English mother-country, who could have prevented Canada from passing under the American flag? Let us say it; let us repeat it to these gentlemen of the *Gazette*, of the *Star*, of the *Globe and Mail* of Toronto, of the *Free Press* of Winnipeg: If a Canada exists of which they can make today a bulwark of empire, it is because a share of it was built in the French way and because, in 1776 as in 1849, we refused to join their ancestors who wished to cede her to the United States.

## APPEAL TO YOUTH

Young French Canadians, men and women, never has a more difficult task, nor a more inspiring one, been offered to a more ardent youth. Do not talk too much: a generation led astray robbed us of everything: our present, our future and even the pride which gave us love of life. One thing remains to you that they could not take because it is untakable: your souls as young Frenchmen and as young Catholics. Become for us a strong, proud people. A proud people — one which has done with submission to the mighty, because they carry almost on their skin their sense of right, pride in their past and in their mission, and their dignity as a human nation. A strong people would be first of all a united people. Through ignorance, passion or the folly of party spirit, politicians of the old school have destroyed our great ideas, the great feelings which are basic to the idea of patriotism or of national brotherhood. These idealogical vacancies in our spirits have deplorably increased our individuality as Frenchmen. Today, not only are we disunited, but so much has this anarchy become a part of our blood, that the best among us seem unable to exorcise the devil of discord. Youth who have thrown to the nettles the old empty partisan shells, you of a generation more homogenous because of a firmer national doctrine, you will have understood that, in these evil days, the first duty of French Can-

adians is to establish a united front at home before trying to do it elsewhere. In this way, young people, you will serve, far better than anyone else, better than the professional *bonne-ententistes*, the cause of Canadian union. If disunion exists between the races, particularly because the French Canadians are too divided to make themselves and justice respected, we conclude that there never will be union in Canada until there is national union among the French Canadians.

A strong people would still be a people attached to its moral strength, to its faith, to its Catholicism, by

all the fibres of its soul, planted in its past, in its traditions, in its Quebec earth, as solidly as the maple. It would be a people possessing a well regulated organic life: economic life, social life, political life, cultural life. This masterpiece of strength and faith you will create, you will give to us. You will not build it by borrowing right and left, from foreign philosophies, from programmes for social restoration which are not of our land and not of our atmosphere. A Catholic is too rich to borrow from communists or socialists. The French Canada of to-morrow, an original creation, will be flesh of your flesh, the flower of your spirit. It will gush forth, resplendent with youth and beauty, from the breath of you young French Canadians, from your sociology as sons of Christ. Whatever may be said, we are a little people who have never had much happiness to spare, you will do these things for us in order that at last there may come an hour in our life, a day of wholesome retaliation, when it will be possible for us to say to ourselves as others do: "I have a land of my own; I have a soul of my own; I have a future of my own".

*Imprimatur:*

*PHILIPPE PERRIER, v.g.*

*Montreal, November 23rd, 1943.*