

'National sovereignty complete'

Process of reform not ended: Trudeau

Excerpts from the speech of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau at the patriation ceremony on Saturday.

For more than half a century, Canadians have resembled young adults who leave home to build a life of their own, but are not quite confident enough to take along all their belongings. We became an independent country for all practical purposes in 1931, with the passage of the Statute of Westminster. But by our own choice, because of our inability to agree upon an amending formula at that time, we told the British Parliament that we were not ready to break this last colonial link.

After 50 years of discussion we have finally decided to retrieve what is properly ours. It is with happy hearts, and with gratitude for the patience displayed by Great Britain, that we are preparing to acquire today our complete national sovereignty. It is my deepest hope that Canada will match its new legal maturity with that degree of political maturity which will allow us all to make a total commitment to the Canadian ideal.

...
The Government of Quebec decided that it wasn't enough. It decided not to participate in this ceremony, celebrating Canada's full independence. I know that many Quebecers feel themselves pulled in two directions by that decision. But one need look only at the results of the referendum in May, 1980, to realize how strong is the attachment to Canada among the people of Quebec. By definition, the silent majority does not make a lot of noise; it is content to make his-

tory.

History will show, however, that in the guarantees written into the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and in the amending formula — which allows Quebec to opt out of any constitutional arrangement that touches upon language and culture, with full financial compensation — nothing essential to the originality of Quebec has been sacrificed.

Moreover, the process of constitutional reform has not come to an end. The two orders of government have made a solemn pledge to define more precisely the rights of native peoples. At the same time, they must work together to strengthen the Charter of Rights, including language rights in the various provinces. Finally, they must try to work out a better division of powers among governments. ...

It is true that our will to live together has sometimes appeared to be in deep hibernation; but it is there nevertheless, living and tenacious, in the hearts of Canadians of every province and territory. I simply wish that the bringing home of our Constitution marks the end of a long winter, the breaking up of the ice-jams and the beginning of a new spring.

What we are celebrating today is not so much the completion of our task, but the renewal of our hope — not so much an ending, but a fresh beginning.

Let us celebrate the renewal and patriation of our Constitution; but let us put our faith, first and foremost, in the people of Canada who will give it life.