

An hon. Member: You certainly did have to defend them.

● (1540)

Mr. Breau: Yes, we did, I admit that; and I am very humble about it, if that makes the hon. member more at ease. But this is precisely my point: at stake are the changing economic circumstances in the world—not in Canada, but in the world. Can we let the federal treasury become eroded to the point where equal opportunity among regions or among people in this country becomes impossible?

The essence of federalism, and especially of Canadian federalism, is to have a political instrument that can balance opportunities for all people in this country. I contend that that political instrument is this parliament. I believe that we in this parliament must make sure that we use every means, every power available to us to do what is best for the country, not just for one part of the country. What should govern us is not only technicalities in the constitution but the spirit of confederation and the desire to keep Canada a fair country for all regions. We must make sure Canada is a country that can stand in the world, and this parliament and the federal government within this parliament is the only body that can guarantee it.

It is one thing to be an opportunist, Madam Speaker, but one must be reasonable. An increase in revenue of roughly \$1 billion for Alberta seems to be a reasonable payment in view of the economic circumstances in the world today. I repeat that I am not unhappy if Alberta is able to benefit from this revenue.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Who gets most of the export tax?

Mr. Breau: Again I will be humble about that. All the export tax goes to reduce the price of energy in Canada. That is what I mean when I talk of balancing opportunities and dividing the benefits among all the people of this country. The hon. member is helping me to make my point.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Say something about the royalties.

Mr. Breau: I have just been talking about the royalties and I said we were changing the Income Tax Act. Surely the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) knows that this parliament has power to deal with the Income Tax Act.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): No one is challenging that.

[Translation]

Mr. Breau: If I am speaking about the importance of a strong federal government, Madam Speaker, it is not because of dogmatism or ideology, but merely because what Canada needs at this point in its history is Canadian reality. We have five relatively stable provinces, economically speaking, and five others that are less so. And that brings me to my riding and my province.

We need the federal government to improve our surroundings. We will always oppose measures which could

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erode the federal power and, consequently, its financial position. I said that my constituency depends on the federal government. The whole northeastern part of New Brunswick needs special assistance to improve its economic structure. However, I would like to point out one thing: we are not without organization, we are not "deportees", we are not beggars and we are not starving to death. I am feeling frustrated almost every week, if not every day, because of this attitude that is developing in New Brunswick and even elsewhere in Canada, this attitude which tends to depict us as a region overwhelmed by problems.

It is true that we have problems, and I will deal with them later in my remarks. And if the publicity about the Acadians in northeast New Brunswick which depicts them as poor people may make the population of New Brunswick and of the rest of Canada aware of the problems of this area, I will be glad. But that is not what happens. We find that the reaction of southern New Brunswick people, especially obvious within the government of New Brunswick—and I am not just referring to the Cabinet but also to the provincial public service—shows itself in a certain uneasiness, a certain restlessness when dealing with the northern people. This situation develops itself, I fear, as a stigma. Finally, in order to attract on ourselves the attention of the Canadian society and the attention of the New Brunswick society and to promote our development, some people have inevitably done deplorable things which gave us bad publicity and which in turn worries those who do not know us.

There is a multiplying effect in all this which generates still more publicity whose results are still more negative.

The worst was probably an article in one of the *MacLean's* magazines of last year which described a particular region, Tracadia, as a desperate area, obviously a disgrace. The article reflected this stigma, this lack of understanding of the problems of the people of northeastern New Brunswick, and particularly of Acadians in the northeast of New Brunswick. The strange thing about this, is that from what I have been told, the author of this article is a native of New Brunswick or stayed in New Brunswick for some time. I did not bother to keep this article or to quote from it because I found it disgusting, ignorant and unworthy of a supposedly responsible magazine.

An hon. Member: Shame!

Mr. Breau: It is true that we have poor people, we do not hide this fact, and it is also true that we have economic and other problems.

Madam Speaker, we agree that this should be made public, and I do not blame those who want to talk about it, whether it be *MacLean's* or the national press or whoever it may be, they can say all they want, but I take exception to the fact that they do not talk about the positive aspects even though there are some. For every sign of poverty, for every problem, there is a sign of progress. Moreover, for every problem without exception, there is a group or community direction to take care of it, to study it and to look for answers. Normally, responsible people would talk about these to give the true picture to Canada and the rest of the province. But some people try to show the opposite. We may have doubts about their motives, which are per-