

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate you on your election and to congratulate also the Speaker and the Deputy Chairman of the Committees of the Whole for their appointment. As our leader has already done, I want to assure you that you do have our full trust, support and collaboration and that you have my personal support.

I would also like to take this opportunity, as this is my first speech, to congratulate the Right Hon. Jean Chrétien, Prime Minister, my leader, the Leader of the Opposition, and the leader of the Reform Party for their election and to extend those congratulations to all the members present here tonight.

Before I begin my speech, I would like to complete my comment since I am lucky enough to speak right after the question period following the speech of the hon. minister. I would like to remind him of all the great battles we fought against federalism just to obtain a few crumbs. Let him remember also that federalism gave us the War Measures Act and the 1982 Constitution, signed without Quebec's consent. I can still see the Prime Minister and you sitting in front of the Parliament with the Queen of England in 1982 and celebrating the exclusion of Quebec from the Constitution; Quebecers remember also and maybe that is one reason why there are so many of us representing the Bloc Québécois here.

That is what you did. In 1982, you were with the Prime Minister celebrating the exclusion of Quebec. Would you have done so if another province had declined to sign the Constitution? Never! Quebecers did not forget and they wanted to show you so clearly by their votes.

Mr. Speaker, I would like first of all to sincerely thank my constituents in the riding of Richelieu who have once again placed their confidence in me in the election of October 25.

The riding of Richelieu, which I am proud to represent here, is typical of Quebec as a whole. For one thing, over 65 per cent of my constituents voted for the Bloc Québécois. Moreover, these people are going through very harsh economic times.

The riding is characterized by an active agricultural life, dynamic industries, the presence of members of the Abenaki Nation, seaport operations and burgeoning cultural activities. There are towns like Sorel, whose history goes back 350 years, and Nicolet, with its Museum of Religions. I could also mention the beautiful farmlands of St-Ours, Ste-Victoire, St-Robert, St-Aimé, Baie-du-Febvre, Ste-Gertrude and parts of the lovely towns of Bécancour, La Visitation, St-Zépherin, Précieux Sang and Nicolet. There are also the commercial fishermen in Pierre-ville and St-François, the big iron and steel companies in Sorel and Tracy and the high technology companies of the Bécancour industrial park, the biggest industrial park in Quebec and the whole of Canada. Unfortunately, as elsewhere in Quebec, the region is struggling with an unusually high unemployment rate

### *The Address*

and some serious social problems, like poverty and dropping out of school.

On September 4, 1984, I was elected for the first time as a member of this House. The mandate my constituents gave me was clear: I was supposed to strive to bring about real change and fight for their interests. During the debate on the first Speech from the Throne of the conservative government, I denounced the waste and chaos resulting from 15 years of liberal power. Pierre Trudeau's team, of which today's Prime Minister was one of the main actors, left Canada a huge debt, inconsistent policies and constitutional squabbles that were almost institutionalized.

• (1755)

If I interchanged the names of the parties today in this House, I could make almost the same speech as I did in 1984, after the Speech from the Throne.

We had hoped that things would change for Quebecers and the people of Richelieu, but they have not. The Conservatives too left Quebecers with an enormous debt, inconsistent policies and a constitutional disaster.

Unemployment is still alarming and is forcing thousands of Canadians into inactivity. More than ever before, businesses have problems upgrading their facilities. Like never before, farmers will have to face the new GATT realities. Our youth are lacking resources to start businesses. The gap between the poor and the rich is constantly widening.

The people of Richelieu also share with other Quebecers the huge legacy that was left by the old federal parties: a \$46 billion deficit and a \$500 billion debt. Think about it: that represents a \$100 000 one-family house for 5 million Canadian families.

The people of my riding must also deal with the overlapping between Ottawa and Quebec programs in the areas of professional training, health, education, environment, communications and assistance to businesses. Another concrete example of Quebecers paying twice is the Nicolet Police Institute, in my riding.

For instance, a municipality such as Tracy, which is located in my riding, wants to have one of its police officers specially trained in criminal investigations and has to send him to the Nicolet Police Institute, but the municipality must pay for the cost of that training. On the other hand, for other municipalities throughout Canada, there is the Canadian Police College.

These municipalities also send their police officers for training in specialized fields like criminal investigations, but in their case, the federal government pays for all the costs of the programs. Quebecers pay 100 per cent of the specialized training for their police officers and also 25 per cent for the cost of the Canadian Police College, since we represent 25 per cent of the Canadian population. That is a concrete example of overlapping which I see every day in my riding.